YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS' INCLUSIVITY OF LGBTQ NEWCOMERS – A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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Table of Contents

Abstract

LGBTQ newcomer youth in Canada experience unique challenges due to their intersecting identities which may negatively impact their well-being and development. For those lacking support at home and in school, youth-serving organizations provide various services and socialization that can effectively address these challenges. In a two-stage content analysis, this study explored LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity in 39 youth-serving organizations in Toronto and Vancouver, as well as programs and services offered to this population specifically. Stage 1 findings demonstrate that few organizations displayed inclusion of and supports for LGBTQ newcomers. Stage 2 findings show that approaches to programs and services offered to this population can be categorized into four themes: cultural and linguistic sensitivity, skills development & education, socialization & community connections, and health & well-being. The efficacy of their approaches is largely supported by the literature. Recommendations for best practices are discussed, with an emphasis placed on the importance of inclusive policies that incorporate an intersectional understanding of youth.

Introduction

Canadian immigrants and refugees should not be considered as one homogenous group; they represent a variety of classes, ages, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, with many different lived experiences. Some of these newcomers – marginalized to begin with – may face additional layers of marginalization and unique experiences resulting from intersecting identities. This study is concerned with a specific intersection: LGBTQ newcomer youth.

In many countries, identifying as LGBTQ, or promoting its acceptance, is stigmatized or criminal. LGBTQ "propaganda" is prohibited in 17 nations, 40 legally protect individuals who have assaulted or murdered LGBTQ persons because of their sexuality, and homosexuality (or same-sex intercourse) can be punishable by death in 13 countries (Fenton, 2016). While Canada may appear to be a haven for LGBTQ newcomers – it was the first country to accept refugee claims based on persecution related to sexual orientation in 1991 – LGBTQ individuals continue to face discrimination and marginalization upon their arrival in Canada (Kahn et al. 2017).

In addition to xenophobia and challenges associated with settlement, LGBTQ newcomer youth also experience more extreme bulling at school and greater homophobia within their family compared to their Canadian-born peers (Daley et al. 2008). These difficulties can negatively impact their mental health and identity development, creating barriers to a healthy and prosperous life in their new home.

LGBTQ newcomer youth are not an insignificant portion of Canada's population, especially in larger cities considered popular settlement destinations. Statistics Canada reports that in 2011, 34% of recent newcomers were under the age of 24 – the median age was 32 (2011). In both Toronto and Vancouver, 45% of immigrants were under the age of 25 upon

arrival (Statistics Canada, 2016). Among youths in Toronto, 76% were first- or second-generation Canadians in 2016 compared to 41% in all of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2019). Also, Statistics Canada (2018) reports that between 4-10% of Canadian youth identify as either gay, lesbian, or bisexual. We can therefore expect a sizable number of LGBTQ newcomer youth, especially in these larger cities – their challenges thus warrant our attention.

For those lacking sufficient support at home and in school, youth-serving organizations may fill that gap. These organizations provide various services and socialization for children and youth which can have a positive impact on their well-being. Considering this, understanding how inclusive youth-serving organizations are towards LGBTQ newcomers would be of value. Identifying where improvements can be made will aid organizations in the creation and implementation of inclusive policies, allowing them to reach and support this population more effectively.

This study will gauge LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity by exploring two research questions. First, how do youth-serving organizations display inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers on their websites? Second, what programs and services are offered specifically to LGBTQ newcomer youth? These will be answered through a content analysis of these organizations' websites. Websites are important tools for this population as they seek help for their challenges (McDermott, 2014). The Internet can serve as a non-judgmental, anonymous, and comfortable space for finding supports. Hesitant to seek formal professional help on their own, youth are increasingly filling gaps in offline knowledge and with online information (Rickwood, Deane & Wilson, 2007). The Internet is thus a gateway to supports, and organizations that display inclusivity online are likely to attract these youth.

I will begin with a review of the literature to provide some background on settlement and social challenges that may impact the well-being of LGBTQ newcomer youth, the importance of the Internet as a gateway to services, the role youth-serving organizations play in addressing these challenges, and effective interventions and approaches to care. The latter will inform our discussion on whether the organizations in this study provide appropriate resources. Following this, I will outline the methodology and methods guiding this analysis. Next, I will present the findings and discuss the results in relation to the literature. I will conclude this investigation with recommendations for best practices with an emphasis on the need for inclusive policies.

Background & Review of the Literature

Here I provide some background for this study through a brief literature review. I will highlight the unique mental health and settlement challenges LGBTQ newcomer youth face, how they seek help for these challenges, the role youth-serving organizations play, and finally what services and approaches to care effectively address these challenges.

First, I will describe who falls under the designation *LGBTQ newcomer youth*. In Canada, newcomers are typically defined as immigrants or refugees who have been in the country less than five years (Statistics Canada, 2018a). Newcomer is a blanket term lumping these two groups, though their experiences may vary significantly. These differences will be highlighted where applicable.

In using the term LGBTQ, I am referring to a population of individuals who identify as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (the latter an umbrella term for identities that are non-heterosexual or non-cisgender). For this study, LGBTQ is not explicitly shorthand for

longer and more encompassing acronyms such as *LGBTTIQQ2SA*, which comprises questioning, 2-spirited (a common Indigenous North American term), and ally identities. Individuals categorizing themselves as such are not the focus of this study; reviewed literature does not address these specific populations and thus may not be applicable to them. Again, the experiences amongst people broadly categorized as *LGBTQ* significantly differ – these will be addressed as well. In the review of the literature, I will use acronyms the authors use as not to misinterpret the scope of their studied population.

Regarding what qualifies someone as youth, there are many definitions. The United Nations categorizes youth in their international statistical reports as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, though they will adopt member state definitions for national operations which may include persons as old as 35 years (United Nations). Canada considers youth to be between 15 and 24, 30, or 34 years depending on the department and census year (Statistics Canada, 2019). Likewise, the definition varies between studies in the literature and the youth-serving organizations in this analysis. This study will therefore not abide by a strict age range; it will include organizations and literature centering on "youth" regardless of their respective definitions.

Settlement and Social Challenges

Newly arrived immigrants and refugees may lack a robust knowledge of available support services and can face additional barriers in accessing such services – these barriers include language difficulties, immigration status, bureaucratic processes, and perceived racism (Stewart et al., 2008). Unemployment, underemployment, and poverty present additional challenges for newcomers – 60% of underemployed or unemployed Canadians are immigrants (Grant, 2016).

A study by Munro et al. (2013) explored the different types of oppression LGBT newcomer youth (age 14-29) faced during their post-migration lives in the Greater Toronto Area. Drawing from multiple focus groups comprised of 70 youth and 13 service providers, findings suggest these young LGBT newcomers navigate multiple systems of oppression, including "experiences of homophobia and racism within interpersonal relationships, in the LGBT community, in their respective diasporic communities, in social service encounters, and during the immigration/refugee process (Munro et al. 2013, p. 137)". For refugee claimants, proving their sexual orientation during hearings is an additional burden (Reading & Rubin, 2011; Munro et al. 2013).

Daley et al. (2008) found that bullying experienced by LGBT newcomer youth is particularly extreme compared to most Canadian youth, resulting from "intersections between racism, xenophobia, classism, and homophobia (Daley et al. 2008, p. 21)". As a result, social isolation is also commonly experienced by LGBT newcomers (Logie et al. 2016; Keuroghlian et al. 2017). LGBT newcomers experiencing social isolation and discrimination may cope with substances such as alcohol (Keuroghlian et al., 2017).

Transgender newcomer youth, especially transgender females (male to female), are at a greater risk of victimization compared to their gay, lesbian, and bisexual peers (Daley et al., 2008). This may be due to the "public" nature of transitioning and intolerance attributed to the value our patriarchal society places on masculinity (Daley et al., 2008). As a result of stigmatization and hostility, instances of suicide ideation and attempts is extremely high within transgender populations; a 2015 study of Ontario transgender persons found that in the 12 months leading up to the investigation, 35% seriously considered suicide and 11% attempted it (Bauer, 2015).

In addition to homophobia and transphobia experienced socially, LGBT newcomer youth are also confronted with greater hostility and rejection within their family and culture (Daley et al., 2008). Ryan et al. (2009) found that Latino men in the United States face the highest level of family rejection based on their sexual orientation compared to Latino women and white men/women; family acceptance of LGBT youths served as a protective factor for mental health, substance use, and risky sexual behavior in young adults (Ryan et al. 2010). For transgender youth in Canada, family connectedness was the strongest protective factor (compared to school connectedness and perceived support of friends) for mental health problems associated with the discrimination, harassment, and violence they often experience (Veale et al., 2017).

To avoid victimization and rejection, LGBTQ newcomer youth are often positioned to "choose" between their sexuality and culture (Daley et al. 2008). A common coping strategy exercised by LGBTQ youth is hiding one's identity, known as identity concealment. This behaviour leads to anxiety disorders, poor self-esteem, and depression (Hatzenbuehler, et al., 2016). For some, this dissonance between one's sexuality or gender and cultural identity – described as identity incongruity – can have adverse effects on their mental health (Liboro, 2014).

In addition to these experiences in Canada, many have faced persecution in their countries of origin – it is a reason why many LGBTQ persons migrate. The risk of adverse mental health outcomes in newcomers increases if abuse occurs pre-migration (Hopkinson et al. 2016). A study by Hopkinson et al. (2016) found that 35 of 61 LGBT asylum seekers (57%) in a New York City torture survivor program were persecuted in their countries of origin based on their sexual or gender identity.

For young LGBTQ newcomer youth, schools can be a source of support or another obstacle. A survey of LGBTQ university students from the University of Victoria on their grade-school experiences indicated that many lacked supports in school which contributed to internalized homophobia, social isolation, suicide ideation, depression, anxiety, and maladaptive coping mechanisms (Little, 2001). When asked what would have improved their school experience, the overwhelming suggestion was any form of LGBTQ representation (e.g. role models or in curriculum). Similarly, a comprehensive literature review by McCarty-Caplan (2013) concluded that the absence of LGB acknowledgement in curriculum contributes to hostile school environments.

Currently, Ontario grade-school students are not guaranteed LGBTQ representation. The provinces' sexual education curriculum no longer acknowledges LGBTQ persons and issues following the 2018 provincial election. The newly elected Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario suspended the teaching of a modernized sexual education curriculum implemented by the former governing Liberal Party of Ontario. In its place, the new regime opted to teach the previous version of the curriculum which was introduced to schools in 1998. In addition to the absence of LGBTQ persons and issues, there is no mention of consent, masturbation, or online behavior in the 1998 curriculum.

LGBTQ representation aside, a study of Toronto-area South Asian youth experiences highlighted barriers to accessing mental health services in Ontario's education system (Islam, 2017). A major concern for respondents was a lack of mental health education in grade-school curriculum. While they felt Ontario universities better promoted mental health, a call for improvements were made.

If support is not found in the home or school, the internet can serve as safe space for LGBTQ newcomer youth and enable them to seek helpful resources both online and in their local community. Next, I highlight the importance of the Internet as a gateway to support services.

The Internet as a Support-Seeking Tool

Marginalization, heteronormativity, and negative experiences effecting LGBTQ youth in their social spaces (e.g. at home and school) may inhibit access to resources related to their sexual and gender identity (Pascoe, 2011). Issues surrounding parental support and fear are among the barriers impeding youth in the help-seeking process (Gilchrist & Sullivan, 2006).

Youth tend to not seek formal professional help on their own, with young men and ethnic minorities the least likely to seek help, however youth are increasingly engaging in the help-seeking process through Internet-based information (Rickwood, Deane & Wilson, 2007). LGBTQ youth in particular compensate for gaps in offline resources and support with online information (DeHaan et a., 2013; Hiller et al., 2012).

Asking professionals or responsible adults for help directly was identified as difficult for LGBT youth in a study by McDermott (2014); they were more prepared to communicate their sexuality and related challenges online. The study demonstrated that these youth tend to seek online help through LGBT-orientated support services; websites are more conducive to helping LGBT youth if they appear inclusive of them (McDermott, 2014). Compared to straight youth, young LGBTQ individuals are more adventurous with internet use; they are more likely to have exclusively online friends and meet face-to-face with someone they met on the Internet (Hiller et

al., 2012). LGBTQ youth find it easier to come out online and doing so helps prepare them for disclosing their sexuality offline (Hiller et al., 2012).

A study of Toronto LGBTQ youth and the influence of new media on identity development also found that in addition to exploring identity, finding likeness, and digitally engaging in coming out, Internet-based new media enabled participants to connect with resources (Craig & McInroy, 2014). While there are risks associated with Internet use including potential abuse and exposure to inappropriate content, Craig & McInroy (2014) stressed the benefits of having access to information that would have otherwise been too uncomfortable to ask for. Participants expressed that "new media offer[s] a wealth of relevant, realistic material without the limitations, risks, or difficulties of finding resources offline (Craig & McInroy, 2014, p. 101)".

Many youth-serving organizations have websites that communicate the programs and services they offer. These websites serve as an important tool for youth seeking physical safe spaces and support in their neighborhood or city. In the next section I will describe youth-serving organizations and highlight their important role in shaping the experiences of LGBTQ newcomers and youth generally.

Role and Importance of Youth-Serving Organizations

Youth-serving organizations come in many forms. They can be charitable, for-profit, religion oriented, secular, neighborhood specific, or international. The range of services provided are also diverse, including (but not limited to) educational and career programs, sports and outdoor activities, music and cooking classes, community involvement opportunities, and physical or mental health supports such as clinics and counseling. These organizations can significantly

impact the skills, attitudes, and experiences of youth – those involved with them are more likely to succeed academically and report a greater sense of personal value, agency, and hopefulness (McLaughlin, 2000). Settlement organizations can also provide much of the same services for youth, and LGBTQ newcomer youth are likely to encounter them first; youth-oriented settlement organizations are included in this study.

Many of these youth-serving organizations take a development approach, giving young people tools to tackle the developmental tasks of adolescence. The aim is to set young people on a path to adulthood that avoids serious mistakes or unhealthy choices (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997). Such approaches are effective in holding youth interest and assisting them in achieving development goals without focusing on any deficits they may have (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997).

Regardless of the programming offered by these organizations, the aim is to provide a safe space for youth. This is especially important for LGBTQ newcomer youth who do not consider home or school safe spaces conducive to seeking support for their unique challenges. While LGBTQ oriented youth-serving organizations exist, they may not always be accessible to those dependent on family for transportation or finances (if a program has a fee). If these youth are not ready to disclose their sexuality to family, their dependence presents a barrier to accessing community LGBTQ resources as doing so may out them.

Thus, it is important that all youth-serving organizations be inclusive of LGBTQ newcomers regardless of their programing. If they do not offer services catered to LGBTQ newcomers or LGBTQ youth generally, these organizations can demonstrate inclusivity through their diversity and inclusion statement, with LGBTQ-friendly and racially diverse images on their website, or by offering referrals to LGBTQ newcomer services.

Next, I explore factors and interventions that effectively address the challenges LGBTQ newcomer youth face – this will provide grounds to assess the appropriateness of services and programs offered by youth-serving organizations in our study.

Effective Approaches to Care

In the *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, Nakamura & Pope (2013) point out that when seeking services within their ethnic community or related to immigration, LGBT newcomers may not disclose their sexuality for various reasons. They recommend the heterosexuality of clients should not be assumed in order to facilitate an inclusive environment conducive to disclosure – this will allow providers to connect this population with more appropriate services. Likewise, I feel that youth-serving organizations should not assume heterosexuality on their websites and in their programs to similarly foster an inclusive environment.

Resilience is identified as an important attribute in combating the challenges facing LGBTQ newcomer youth. In a qualitative study with 26 refugee-status participants belonging to a sexual or gender minority in Canada and the United States, Alessi (2016) explored pre-migration experiences and post-migration resilience. The study determined that "staying hopeful and positive; utilizing community and legal services; receiving support from significant others and friends; doing whatever it takes; and giving back" were factors contributing to resilience (Alessi, 2016, p. 206). Spirituality was also expressed as an effective resilience tool for African and Caribbean participants particularly. This further supports the role youth-serving organizations can play in building resilience for LGBTQ newcomers as they offer support, foster positive connections, and provide the opportunity to give back.

Kahn et al. (2018) found that counselors in Canada and elsewhere knew little about the intersectional needs of LGBT newcomers fleeing persecution, thus presenting a barrier to suitable mental health services. Their qualitative study used in-depth interviews with settlement and mental health service providers as well as LGBT migrants to understand the nature of these barriers. Kahn et al. (2018) pointed to a distrust of mental health care providers and mental health stigmas as barriers to treatment, in addition to difficulties in finding providers who speak their language and are culturally sensitive. The authors called for the consideration of a multipronged care approach with culturally sensitive, traditional clinic-based treatment in conjunction with community-based psychosocial support (Kahn et al. 2018). Youth-serving organizations can likewise reduce such barriers by providing the option to view content on their websites in languages other than English or French, as well as offer services in multiple languages that are community-based and culturally sensitive.

Similarly, an empirical and theoretical literature review by Reading & Rubin (2011) highlight that LGBT asylum seekers may decline individual psychotherapy referrals because of cultural barriers, fear, and shame. Thus, the authors recommend group therapy utilizing multicultural and empowerment frameworks to address the unique challenges LGBT asylum seekers face.

Since family acceptance of LGBT youth served as a protective factor for mental health, substance use, and risky sexual behavior in young adults, Ryan et al. (2010) concluded that parental acceptance must be promoted to increase health equity among this population. Youth-serving organizations can play a role in promoting parental acceptance by demonstrating inclusivity and through educational sections or links on their website.

Literature Review Conclusion

Young LGBTQ immigrants and refugees in Canada face unique challenges associated with the intersection of their age, culture, sexuality or gender identity, and immigration status. When lacking support at home and in the school environment, the Internet can be a useful tool in seeking support and can connect this population with local youth-serving organizations.

Considering the significant number of LGBTQ newcomer youth in Canada and the difficult experiences they may have, these organizations ought to be inclusive of them. Youth-serving organizations that fail to represent youth as a diverse group ignore many knowledges and lived experiences, and thus exclude their voices. This contributes to a narrative that the needs and experiences of LGBTQ newcomer youth are similar to other youth or irrelevant, perpetuating the oppression and marginalization these youth face daily.

For organizations that do offer services and programs for this population, they should be effective in addressing their challenges and help them reach their full potential in their new home. This can be achieved through recognition of their unique experiences, understanding how they seek supports, and by providing interventions that are supported by the evidence.

Methodology

Critical Theory is the overarching paradigm guiding this study. It is an approach with an aim of social and cultural critique – my understanding of this paradigm is informed by Kincheloe & McLaren (2005). Critical Theory carries assumptions that discourse is "fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 304)". Facts do not exist in a vacuum – they are unfixed and tied to values and ideology. If social

conditions are accepted as a necessary truth – which traditional research practices have supported – systems of oppression are perpetuated (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). As such, the aim of this study is to illuminate those oppressive conditions in a call for action to change the "truth" LGBTQ newcomer youth face. The call for action here will take the form of critiques on current conditions followed by evidence-informed recommendations for best practices.

Additionally, the concept of intersectionality is incorporated into this analysis to explore whether and to what degree these organizations understand youth as a diverse group. It is the notion that 'one-size-fits-all' approaches cannot address the complex inequalities certain populations face and thus fails to reflect and effectively address their lived realities (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). Intersectionality recognizes the unique experiences of overlapping identities – it does not adhere to an additive approach which sums the independent experiences of collective identities (e.g. sexuality + immigration status + age).

Regarding how identities are understood, Shields (2008) conceptualizes them as social categories of which one claims membership – personal meanings are attached to them and it enables individuals to express their authentic sense of self. An identity category derives meaning through its relations with another category, and their formation and maintenance is dynamic – the individual is actively engaged in the process (Shields, 2008). One's identity position is not passively assigned but rather developed and informed by the other identities they claim. However, through the lens of another categories, identities can be viewed as simple or one-dimensional (Shields, 2008). For example, gender as an aspect of racial categorization may be understood as either male or female, neglecting other possibilities such as gender fluidity. Drawing from this conception of identity, Shields (2008) suggests that the meanings attached are historically contingent.

Those with intersecting identities may be disadvantaged compared to others in one of their identity categories while also more advantaged than people in the other (Shields, 2008). For example, a gay white male may be disadvantaged compared to other males for deviating from heterosexual standards, but may still enjoy advantages over black males due to white privilege. In addition to being a feature of one's self, identities reflect social stratification – they demonstrate "the operation of power relations among groups that comprise that identity category (Shields, 2008, p. 302)".

An implicit emphasis will also be placed on the social determinants of health, including mental health. This framework posits the well-being of people are influenced by factors beyond their biological or neurological workings, that the social circumstances of the individual have a significant influence on their health. It underscores the challenges facing LGBTQ newcomer youth covered in the literature review above, as well as the important role youth-serving organizations play as an effective social intervention.

Methods

To gauge the how these youth-serving organizations are inclusive towards LGBTQ newcomer youth, an independent content analysis of their websites in Toronto and Vancouver was conducted in April and May of 2019. These large Canadian cities were selected as they are popular settlement destinations – a comparison between the two will illuminate where improvements can be made.

Two research questions informed this analysis. First, how do youth-serving organizations display inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers on their websites? Second, what programs and services

are offered specifically to LGBTQ newcomer youth? This two-stage content analysis was inspired and informed by a Giwa & Chaze (2018) study, which examined settlement organizations and their inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers in Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Giwa & Chaze similarly analyzed the websites of organizations to assess inclusivity as well as the types of services offered. Though following a similar methods, this study differs from Giwa & Chaze (2018) by focusing on LGBTQ newcomer *youth* and *youth*-serving organizations under the assumption that the needs and experiences of youth are distinct and such organizations may provide the most appropriate resources. Also, settlement organizations may not be institutions that youth are continually exposed to – other than school, young LGBTQ newcomers may engage more with youth-serving organizations following their settlement as they mature into adulthood.

Also, in following similar methods, results from both studies may be compared to assess whether primarily youth-serving or settlement organizations in Canada are more inclusive of, and best suited to assist, LGBTQ newcomer youth. There is some overlap; immigrant-serving agencies were included in this study if they devoted a lot of focus on youth, while some of the organizations in Giwa & Chaze (2018) study were specific to youth. However, the core purposes of the organizations in both studies are largely distinct and thus worth distinguishing.

Toronto Sample

Youth-serving organizations in Toronto were selected through the city's website on the 'Find Youth Services' page on April 25 & 26, 2019 (City of Toronto). A total of 1036 organizations were identified, viewable in either map or list form. Each entry was accompanied by contact

information, eligibility, and languages offered. Selecting a sample from such an expansive list required robust inclusion/exclusion criteria. Organized by category, I began by filtering out organizations that did not serve our target population, such as those catering to Indigenous youth. Those that provided a specific need for people generally (e.g. food banks, tax services, dentists, etc.) were also excluded, along with programs and services offered by schools, hospitals, and governments directly as they represent a relatively small aspect of their institution's overall operation. This process reduced the total to 832.

From here, I went through the list and recorded organizations that met further criteria. First, they must have had a functional website as this study is interested in the content of their online presence. While an organization can serve or operate in other cities, provinces, or countries, they needed to have a physical presence or listed address in Toronto. They must also cater to people – a few organizations listed were councils or groups representing other agencies and were thus omitted. Duplicates were also excluded at this stage – some organizations had multiple listings for different programs linking to the same URL. This reduced the list to 241.

A reason for the initial large list of organizations is that the city website links to any organization youths can access, rather than those that serve youth primarily. Thus, to narrow the list further, I only included organizations that devote a significant focus on youth – those that did not refer to youth in the description or eligibility section were excluded. Following this, I arrived at a list of 101 organizations applicable to our research question. To narrow this down to a more workable sample due to resource and time constraints, a random number generation was used to select 25% of the list resulting in a total of 25 youth-serving organizations for Toronto.

Vancouver Sample

For Vancouver, the sample was also drawn from an official city website catering specifically to youth; they were collected on May 4, 2019. Under the 'Vancouver Youth Organizations & Services' section of the website, 217 organizations and programs were listed along with a description and link to a website (City of Vancouver). The same inclusion/exclusion criteria used for Toronto was applied, producing 55 organizations. Unlike Toronto's website, all the organizations listed were geared specifically toward youth, though a significant number of otherwise applicable organizations were excluded as website links were either inactive or incorrect. Random number generation was again used to select 25% of the list – remaining consistent with the Toronto sample selection – which resulted in a sample of 14 Vancouver youth-serving organizations.

Final Sample & Approach to Research Questions

Altogether, this stage of the investigation examines 39 websites; the primary focuses of these organizations are highlighted in Table 1 below. This sample size is similar to the Giwa & Chaze (2018) study which explored 34 websites – they similarly used random number generation, selecting one-third of identified websites. Annual reports and other organizational publications are not of focus in this content analysis under the assumption youth are less likely to encounter them while navigating the websites. However, as these reports may inform and reflect the website content, they are included to provide greater context in the discussion section.

Primary focus of organization	n=
Life skills, education	12
Community specific, general	9
Physical or mental health	8
Cultural or settlement	4
Advocacy or social justice	2
LGBTQ community	2
Religious	1

Table 1. Organization types in sample, N=39.

Question one – how youth-serving organizations display inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers on their websites – will be answered by exploring 8 sub-questions adapted and expanded from the Giwa & Chaze (2018) study. They are as follows:

1. Is there an option to view content from the organization's website in languages other than English and French?
2. Does the organization's website have LGBTQ-friendly images (e.g., rainbow flags or positive space images?).
3. Does the organization's website mention or link to services for LGBTQ persons?
4. Does the organization's website mention or link to services for newcomers?
5. Does the organization's website mention or link to services *specifically* for LGBTQ newcomers?
6. Does the organization's website mention a diversity or inclusion policy/statement that *specifically* addresses LGBTQ newcomers?
7. Does the organization's website mention a diversity or inclusion policy/statement that addresses either LGBTQ persons or newcomers?
8. Does the organization's website display racially diverse images of LGBTQ persons?

The second research question asks what programs and services are offered to LGBTQ newcomer youth. Though 24 out of 39 organizations linked to services for either newcomers or LGBTQ individuals, just 4 were specific to LGBTQ newcomers – these 4 will be of focus. Following a

description of the services offered in the findings section, I assess whether they stand to effectively address the challenges facing this population in the discussion by drawing on the literature review above.

Findings

Stage 1: LGBTQ Newcomer Inclusivity on Youth-Serving Organization Websites

When it came to viewing the content of websites in languages other than English or French, only five (13%) had the option: 16% in Toronto (T=16%), 7% in Vancouver (V=7%). This was largely done through imbedded third-party applications, such as the Google Translate tool, though a few provided their own translations. LGBTQ-friendly images appeared on eight (21%) of the websites (T=24%, V=14%), which included the positive space triangle (see Figure 1) and photographs of people holding pride flags or positive LGBTQ messages. In some cases, programs serving LGBTQ persons had logos incorporating inclusive symbols (e.g. a circle of joining colorful hands).

Figure 1. Positive space symbol – example from website in sample.

Services for LGBTQ persons or newcomers were available or linked to on 23 (59%) of the websites (T=64%, V=50%). However, services available specifically for LGBTQ newcomers

was only mentioned on four (10%) of them (T=12%, V=7%). The services provided by these four are described below in the Stage 2 findings.

Regarding diversity/inclusion statements on these websites, none specifically addressed LGBTQ newcomers, though 11 (28%) mentioned LGBTQ persons and/or newcomers separately (T=36%, V=14%). Many of these 11 mentioned both LGBTQ persons and newcomers in a list of individuals that are welcome, though only one expresses that these identities may intersect. One organization cites the Ontario Human Rights Code, stating they will not tolerate discrimination towards individuals based on personal characteristics including sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship/immigration status, country of origin, language spoken, and religion among others. Diversity and inclusion as being a core value and strength of the organization was a common theme.

Finally, four (10%) displayed racially diverse images of LGBTQ persons. This was determined in all four cases by photographs of individuals either wearing or holding LGBTQ symbols (e.g. rainbow flags, pro-LGBTQ messages), or participating in a pride celebration. It is noted that the individuals pictured may not actually belong to the LGBTQ community – they may be heterosexual, cis-gender allies or models – though they still serve to provide a visual representation for LGBTQ newcomers navigating the website. For a table summarizing of all these findings, see Appendix.

Stage 2: Services Offered to LGBTQ Newcomer Youth

While 18 of the 39 youth-serving organizations in this study were identified as providing services for the LGBTQ community, just four did so for LGBTQ newcomers specifically. Of

these four, their primary focus either centered on the newcomers (n=2), or the LGBTQ community (n=2).

Of the newcomer focused organizations, one is a Toronto-based, provincial-wide non-profit agency providing culturally and linguistically sensitive counseling and settlement services to Chinese Canadians. One of their programs include a sex education series on the struggles of youth and homosexuality. The webpage for the program expressed in detail the challenges facing young Chinese gay and lesbian persons, including social discrimination, lack of acceptance in Chinese culture and families, rejection in religion and the school system, and loneliness. They also highlighted that these individuals may cope by concealing their identity, through substance use, and potentially suicide. The bottom of the page included contact information and stressed confidentiality.

The second newcomer-oriented organization provides community and settlement programs in over 30 languages (with 21 languages supported on the website). Also based in Toronto, they aim to unite cultures, assist in employment searches, and teach youth the skills required for success in their new home. Decentralized, their programs are offered in schools, community centres, and libraries throughout the city free of charge. While there is a page for LGBTQ programming in the youth section, there was nothing listed at the time of analysis. However, a workshop series for “LGBTQ2S” newcomer youth aged 13-29 was listed when “LBGTQ” was entered through their search bar – the program promises to be a friend-making opportunity and provide leadership and life skills. Elsewhere, the website indicated that staff receive training from the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants to effectively serve LGBTQ newcomers.

One of the LGBTQ centred youth-serving organizations offered anonymous support for individuals in Ontario under 29 years through telephone, text, and messaging services. They also provide referrals to resources through an extensive list of third-party organizations on their website. For LGBTQ newcomers specifically, they link to programs which include drop-in workshops, one-on-one counselling, settlement support, and primary healthcare access. Other online resources listed include online communities for this population and multiple LGBTQ oriented settlement agencies.

Only one Vancouver-based organization in this study was identified as offering programs and services specifically to LGBTQ newcomers. Also catering to the LGBTQ community generally, it aims to provide a safe space where support, connections, and leadership is facilitated. They provide both one-on-one and group youth support, free counselling, social events, volunteer opportunities, workshops, and educational services to name a few. For LGBTQ newcomers, occasional meditation workshops were offered to improve their mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being to better to deal with life challenges. Networking opportunities with LGBTQ newcomer service providers had been previously available.

Discussion

Stage 1

Websites are an important part of the help-seeking process for this population; serving as a safe space to explore resources, they help fill knowledge gaps and are often the first point of contact between the individual and the organization. The literature indicates that LGBTQ youth tend to seek online help through LGBTQ-orientated support services, and content that lacks cultural or language considerations may present a barrier for newcomers. Thus, youth-serving organization

websites that are inclusive of LGBTQ newcomers are better poised to retain and connect these youth with resources that can effectively address their challenges.

Of course, we should not expect every youth-serving organization to target LGBTQ persons, newcomers, and the intersection of the two. However, considering the number of immigrants and refugees in Toronto and Vancouver, and the especially difficult situations young LGBTQ members may encounter in the community, we should expect a significant percentage of the organizations to at least demonstrate inclusivity regardless of services offered. Understanding how (and how many) youth-serving organizations display inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers is explored in our first research question through eight sub-questions. This section will further expand on the rational for each sub-question and the significance of the findings.

For question 1, the aim was to determine how many websites in our sample allowed users to view content in languages other than French and English, Canada's official languages. Since Toronto and Vancouver are popular settlement destinations, many speak an unofficial language. In the Toronto census metropolitan area, about 1.8 million predominantly speak an immigrant language at home (33%); in Vancouver, roughly 712,000 (31%) do so (Statistics Canada, 2016a; Statistics Canada, 2016b). Additionally, about 130,000 people in Toronto (1 in 20) cannot converse in either official language (Wilson, Buccioni, & Lau, 2018). Thus, there is a sizable number that would find English or French only websites challenging to navigate. Though newcomer youth can pick up English or French relatively quickly in school and thus multi-lingual websites become less essential, websites should be linguistically accessible to these youth immediately upon (or even before) their arrival. If youth-serving organizations in these language diverse cities hope to be as inclusive as possible, their websites should allow for easy translation.

One may reasonably expect that many websites are accessible to linguistic minorities in the same way most buildings provide wheelchair access – it appears to be a relatively easy way to serve as many people as possible. However, only five of the 39 (or 13%) of the websites in the sample had the option to translate which seems low considering the linguistic diversity in these cities. Also, none of the websites were in French; English is the predominant official language spoken in these two cities, and the websites of these youth-serving organizations reflect this.

Of the Vancouver websites, just one of 14 (or 7%) allowed for translation. This website, which is for an organization that provides community-based services to youth and adults with developmental disabilities, allowed for translations into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, and Spanish. Absent from the options was Tagalog, the third most spoken language in the Vancouver area (Statistics Canada, 2016b).

Languages options varied for the Toronto websites which included them. Two were exhaustive, one of which with 103 languages available through an embedded Google Translate tool. One was an organization primarily serving the Chinese community and only had Chinese as an option. Another, which serves the whole city, had Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Sri Lankan, and Somalian language options; the two most spoken foreign languages – Chinese and Tagalog – were not included.

The organizations that did not offer additional language options on their websites were also less likely to mention newcomers in their inclusion/diversity statement, as well as offer services to LGBTQ newcomers and newcomers generally. This suggests the majority of youth-serving organizations in these cities largely view Canadian youth as being monocultural in addition to linguistically homogenous (i.e. English speaking).

In offering English as the only means to navigate their websites collectively, these organizations are contributing to linguistic imperialism. Noticeably absent from all the organizations in this study is the option to translate the website into one of Canada's many Indigenous languages; both Toronto and Vancouver reside on traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. While one may argue that Indigenous youth in urban areas are fluent in English and inclusion of these languages are not essential, I argue that the explicit demonstration of inclusivity in doing so is an important step in reconciliation and a way to move forward from historical oppression. These organizations are in a position of power in relation to their users and thus mediate the discourse – though likely not intentional, the English only approach most youth-serving organizations currently take appears to be a perpetuation of colonialism.

With logistics in mind, I do not advocate that every or most organizations offer programs and services in multiple languages; linguistically diverse communities in these cities already have options. For example, a Chinese immigrant in Vancouver will be able to find a Chinese-serving organization without difficulty. However, may language specific organizations may not be best suited for LGBTQ newcomer youth. Care from providers perceived as belonging to one's ethnicity or culture may promote identity concealment behaviour in such youth as they may fear being outed to their family or community (Keuroghlian et al. 2017). The hesitation of LGBTQ newcomer youth in addressing challenges related to their sexuality may prevent them from accessing appropriate resources. Predominantly English-speaking organizations may offer more appropriate services, and a multilingual website will aid these youth in discovering them.

For LGBTQ immigrants and refugees, it may not be enough that youth-serving organizations are inclusive of newcomers. As mentioned in the literature review, LGBTQ youth tend to seek online help through LGBTQ-orientated support services. Thus, organizations that

are welcome of newcomers and inclusive of LGBTQ persons may garner greater engagement from this population.

The degree to which youth-serving organizations are inclusive of LGBTQ persons was the aim of question 2. This was measured by analyzing whether their websites contained LGBTQ-friendly images, such as transgender or rainbow pride flags, yellow equal signs, or rainbow (positive space) triangles. Such images were only found on 8 the 39 websites (or 21%). Twenty-four percent of youth-serving organizations in Toronto had LGBTQ-friendly images versus 14% in Vancouver. I note such LGBTQ-friendly images may not resonate with all cultures, however cultural globalization and widespread Internet use among youth make it unlikely these symbols and their meanings are unrecognizable.

While the percentage of websites containing LGBTQ-friendly images in both cities was greater than the portion of the population thought to be LGBTQ (up to 10% according to Statistics Canada), this should not serve as a success benchmark. LGBTQ persons still face considerable marginalization and discrimination in Canada, including in larger cities such as Toronto and Vancouver (Kahn et al. 2017). Such images convey support for the community, indicating that the organization is a safe place for individuals to be themselves.

Also, the inclusion of LGBTQ-friendly images on an organization's website requires relatively little effort on their part. While providing LGBTQ oriented services may be beyond the focus or resources of an organization, a simple JPEG can provide recognition and communicate inclusivity. For this reason, the high percentage of websites that do not contain such images suggest that many of these organizations either consider youth to be homogenous in their sexuality and gender identity, or that references to orientation and gender are irrelevant. I argue that issues concerning one's gender and sexual orientation are exceptionally relevant for youth,

with related challenges permeating every aspect of their lives. Since one's identity is never checked at the door, youth-serving organizations of all kinds have a responsibility to demonstrate that their programming and services are inclusive and safe.

In addition to assessing how inclusive and accessible youth-serving organizations are for LGBTQ newcomers through LGBTQ-friendly imagery and language options, this stage of the investigation also examined how many organizations offer services to this population. Questions 3 and 4 explore whether these websites link to or indicate offered services for either LGBTQ or newcomer youth respectively, while question 5 examines whether services are available for the intersection of these two identities.

Forty-six percent (n=18) of the websites mentioned or linked to services for LGBTQ persons overall, with 48% (n=12) in Toronto and 43% (n=6) in Vancouver. This finding was unexpected as only two of the organizations in our sample (5%) explicitly catered to the LGBTQ community. This suggests that the organizations in Toronto and Vancouver identify LGBTQ youth as population requiring attention.

For newcomers, the availability of services was even greater; 51% (n=20) of the websites mentioned or linked to services for this group. Again, the percentage was greater for Toronto with 56% (n=14) of websites doing so, and Vancouver at 43% (n=6). These numbers may seem surprising considering only three of the 39 were identified as settlement-oriented youth-serving organizations, though the large percentage of organizations supporting newcomers reflects that these cities have a large newcomer community. What is surprising is that despite the large number of organizations offering services to newcomers, so few allowed users to view their websites in a language other than English; again, this creates a barrier for some linguistic minorities seeking such resources.

Regarding the kind of services LGBTQ newcomer youth should use, one could argue that they can choose and benefit from programs and services for either newcomers or LGBTQ persons. This sentiment ignores that such youth have unique lived experiences which require unique interventions; LGBTQ newcomer youth may see greater benefits from services tailored to their specific needs. However, 35 of the 39 organizations (90%) did not mention or link to services for LGBTQ newcomer youth.

This failure to represent and recognize LGBTQ newcomers by most of these organizations minimizes their challenges and excludes their voices, contributing to their oppressive experiences. The ones that do offer services to LGBTQ newcomers in this study hopefully belong to a growing trend, or they can at least serve as an example; these services are outlined in the Stage 2 findings above, and whether they are appropriate is discussed in the following section. Regardless of the type of programming offered, recognition of this population helps to combat the marginalization they experience.

I do note that there is a seemingly unlimited combination of intersecting identities, each with their own unique lived experiences. Even the intersection at hand – LGBTQ newcomer youth – fails to capture the diversity of experiences between individuals. For example, the experiences and needs of a 17-year-old transgender female immigrant from Ecuador will be different from a 27-year-old gay male refugee from Jamaica. Expecting youth-serving organizations to provide services catering to all intersecting identities is not realistic logistically.

How, then, should an organization determine which marginalized groups and intersections to allocate limited resources to, and should LGBTQ newcomer youth be included? Answering this question is beyond the scope of this paper and a potentially impossible task, though I caution against weighing the challenges of one group against another. The lobbying for

resource allocation based on being more oppressed than others amounts to what has been described as the “Oppression Olympics”, which is “an evocative term to describe intergroup competition and victimhood (Hancock, 2011, p. 4)”. It is inconsistent with an intersectional framework; again, intersectionality does not take and additive approach that sums the independent experiences of collective identities; the experiences of different individual are merely unique and cannot be weighed against others.

Thus, considering the vast number of groups that would benefit from specialized attention, I do not argue that that all youth-serving organizations ought to provide resources specific to LGBTQ newcomers. Since no certain group is more important than another, youth-serving organizations are free to allocate resources to whomever group they decide. Though LGBTQ newcomer youth would benefit from a greater number of specific interventions, these resources exist for youths in Toronto and Vancouver nonetheless.

Despite not expecting every or most youth-serving organizations to offer services and programs for LGBTQ newcomers, there is value in mentioning this group in diversity and inclusion policies or statements. Doing so is another way to demonstrate inclusivity and recognize this sizable and marginalized population. The degree to which this was done by Toronto and Vancouver organizations was the aim of question 6.

Unfortunately, none of the 39 websites in the sample specifically mention LGBTQ newcomers in their in diversity/inclusion policies or statements. Again, an exhaustive consideration of every intersecting identities is unrealistic, and selecting the most important or marginalized intersections is problematic. However, these statements can explicitly mention or explain the concept of intersecting identities. This was done by one organization in Vancouver;

the website stated they value “complex, intersectional identities, and operate from an anti-oppression framework”.

Intersectionality aside, 11 (28%) websites mentioned either LGBTQ persons or newcomers separately in their diversity/inclusion statements (question 7). On this metric, Toronto is far ahead with 36% (n=9) of websites doing so compared with Vancouver at 14% (n=2). This suggests that most youth-serving organizations in Toronto and Vancouver present and thus perpetuate LGBTQ persons and newcomers as mutually exclusive groups.

I note that the concept of intersectionality was found in policy documents and reports belonging to eight organizations in the sample; they include community reports, supplemental material for staff, and academic studies the organization has contributed to. Identifying these policies and documents was done through an online search of PDF files associated with the organizations URL that mentioned “intersectionality” or “intersections”. It is likely that more organizations mention intersectionality in offline documents, though time constraints prevented further investigation. While such documents were not of focus in this content analysis as youth are less likely to encounter them, they provide insight into the philosophy guiding the organization. It also suggests a dissonance between the values of an organization and what they communicate on their website. For organizations that follow an intersectional framework, there is no reason they should withhold this from their website baring political pressure (e.g. threats to funding cuts). Highlighting the concept on their website will demonstrate inclusivity to those who cannot be defined by one word.

Finally, question 8 asks whether the websites display racially diverse images of LGBTQ persons; 10% (n=4) of websites did so. Judgements of one’s sexuality and gender were not drawn from physical appearances such hairstyle, and none of the websites included images of

behaviours such as same-sex couples holding hands or kissing. All examples consisted of racially diverse groups or individuals carrying pride flags or wearing pro-LGBTQ clothing. While I do not assume that such individuals are members the LGBTQ community – they may just be allies – these images nevertheless convey that the organization is inclusive of LGBTQ newcomer youth.

In all metrics considered, Toronto youth-serving organizations displayed greater inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers on their websites compared to Vancouver. The largest disparity regarded mentions of either LGBTQ persons or newcomers in the inclusion or diversity statements. While some of the results are promising, this stage of the investigation demonstrates that youth-serving organizations in two of Canada's most populous and diverse cities have much room for improvement regrading LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity, and many of the improvements can be made with a few images and the declaration that all intersecting identities are welcome.

If most of these youth-organizations fail to act in increasing their inclusiveness of LGBTQ newcomers to a critical mass, this population will continue to have their voices suppressed and marginalization will surely persist. The effects of oppression on their well-being requires strong community supports to overcome – websites that are not inclusive create barriers in finding these supports.

Stage 2

Underscoring this study is the concept of intersectionality. Youth are more than a portion of the population between a certain age, newcomers are more than individuals who have recently migrated to a new country, and LGBTQ persons are not solely defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity. Within these designations is great diversity and overlap, with many different

lived experiences that present unique challenges and needs. Programs and services considering only single identity markers will fail to reflect and effectively address lived realities.

While general services offered by youth-serving organizations may be beneficial to LGBTQ newcomer youth, the literature suggests they may not be optimal. Distinct challenges require tailored interventions rather than blanket solutions – that is, a program modeled off dominant culture structures may fail to address the needs of non-dominant members. Whether the youth-serving organizations in this study offer interventions for LGBTQ newcomers was asked in Stage 1; the appropriateness of these interventions and additional considerations are informed by the literature and addressed here.

As mentioned in the findings, only four of the 39 websites indicated services for LGBTQ newcomers specifically. This could be considered surprising as no website mentioned LGBTQ newcomers in their inclusion/diversity statements, though 23 offered services to either LGBTQ persons or newcomers separately – some overlap in programming would be expected. These four organizations focus primarily on either newcomers or the LGBTQ community with services targeting the intersection a smaller aspect of their operation.

All the approaches to care taken by these four organizations are largely consistent with the literature and can be categorized into four themes: cultural and linguistic sensitivity, skills development & education, socialization & community connections, and health & well-being. These categories do overlap, and they ought to; that is, educational seminars and counseling services should be culturally sensitive, medication workshops can both educate and socialize, and youth help lines may provide support in multiple languages. However, these themes will be addressed here categorically to illuminate the strengths of each on their own. Additional observations regarding these services are highlighted at the end of this section.

Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity

A culturally and linguistically sensitive approach to care was championed by multiple studies covered in our literature review (Reading & Rubin, 2011; Kahn et al. 2018). This seemed to be a common approach by the four organizations serving LGBTQ newcomer youth. As noted, the website for the Toronto settlement organization in this stage indicated that staff are trained by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants to appropriately serve LGBTQ newcomers. Also, the website for the Toronto-based organization serving Chinese Canadians emphasized their culturally and linguistically sensitive counseling and settlement services.

In many cases, this was achieved by offering services provided by members of the same cultural community, though this may not always be the best approach. Keuroghlian et al. (2017) suggest that care from providers perceived as belonging to one's racial or ethnic community may promote identity concealment behaviour in LGBTQ newcomers as they may fear of being outed to their family or community. This was expressed by the Vancouver-based LGBTQ organization, which stated that while refugees can find support from community members sharing the same country of origin, many LGBTQ refugees and newcomers migrated to flee homophobia and transphobia experienced in their community back home.

The Chinese Canadian serving organization appeared to be aware of such concerns as well – confidentiality was stresses in bolded text punctuated with an exclamation mark. Confidentiality was also a key promise on the LGBTQ youth helpline website.

Skills Development & Education

Skill development is important for setting marginalized youth on a healthy path to adulthood, and by focusing on development goals rather than personal deficits, youth-organizations can

better hold youth interest (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997). This approach to programming and was used by two of the four organizations.

The Toronto-based settlement organization provided a life-skills building workshops for LGBTQ youth that focuses on building self-esteem and a positive body image, leadership skills, healthy relationships, and understanding culture and values. The Chinese Canadian serving organization offered a youth leadership program that aims to strengthen resilience, attitude, and decision making, though it is not specific to LGBTQ members of that community.

In addition to skills building, education on queer issues benefits LGBTQ newcomer youth directly and indirectly. Children and youth who learn about LBGTQ people and issues are more empathetic and interested in advocating for them; the inclusion and acknowledgement of LGBTQ persons and issues contributes to a reduction in hostile school environments (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; McCarty-Caplan, 2013). Since LGBTQ education is no longer mandated in Ontario schools, community and youth-serving organizations play an important role in providing such education.

A sex education series focusing on the struggles gay and lesbian Chinese youth experience was offered by the Toronto-based Chinese Canadian serving organization. While the webpage for the program detailed such challenges in depth, as well as coping behaviours, further details on the program were absent. It is not clear whether the education series takes the form of a lecture or group discussion, for example. The education series also appeared to target non-LGBT individuals who want to learn more, such as parents or friends. When people learn more about LGBT issues, they become more accepting (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003). Thus, this stands to be a beneficial program as family acceptance of LGB youth reduces the risk of substance use, and risky sexual behavior, and adverse mental health outcomes in young adults

(Ryan et al. 2010). Absent from this program and the website was a recognition of transgender persons and issues.

In addition to one-on-one online support, the LGBTQ youth help-line website provided booklets and factsheets for LGBTQ newcomers from various third-party settlement and human right organizations. Their emphasis on online resources aligns with the way LGBTQ youth engage in the help-seeking process; this population increasingly fills gaps in offline knowledge with information available online (Rickwood et al., 2007; DeHaan et al., 2013). The anonymity of the Internet also serves as a safe space for exploring challenges related to one's sexuality.

The help-line website also linked to resources for service providers, which included an LGBTQ cultural competency toolkit. This is important as many service providers in Canada know little about the intersectional needs of LGBTQ newcomers fleeing persecution (Kahn et al., 2018). Providers with a greater knowledge of the lived experiences and appropriate interventions for this intersection stand to reduce barriers and provide more effective care.

Employment services are especially important for LGBTQ newcomer youth as they face many barriers entering and succeeding in the workforce. Sixty percent of Canadian immigrants are underemployed or unemployed (Grant, 2016). Additionally, LGBTQ persons face barriers in securing and maintaining suitable employment due to homophobia. The anticipation of discrimination also lowers the career expectations of LGBTQ persons – they expect to earn less than their heterosexual counterparts (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2012). While many organizations in this study offered employment programs, none of them offered employment services for LGBTQ newcomer youth specifically - this is an area where improvements must be made.

Socialization & Community Connections

Regardless of the organization type, opportunities for youth to socialize and network with the community can combat social isolation and facilitate positive connections with providers. Social isolation is a concern for LGBTQ newcomers especially and can lead to maladaptive coping behaviours such as substance use. In addition to addressing social isolation, socialization builds resilience in LGBTQ newcomers. As covered in the literature, resilience is a key trait for resisting adverse mental health outcomes that result from the challenges facing these youth (Alessi, 2016).

Socialization opportunities are commonly offered by youth-serving organizations. Some are more oriented towards addressing challenges by employing community-based psychosocial support or group therapy; this approach is most commonly suggested in the literature as an effective intervention for LGBTQ newcomers (Kahn et al., 2018; Logie et al., 2016; Reading & Rubin, 2011). Others are more informal and merely offer an opportunity for youth to have a good time with their peers – implicit is the understanding that these experiences will have a positive impact on their lives.

The Vancouver-based LGBTQ-serving organization provided many such opportunities. They include a drop-in for the newcomer community that promised social activities and games, hangouts, and fun events with the aim of establishing a sense of belonging and meaningful friendships in the local LGBTQ community. They also offered small group dialogues for both documented and undocumented newcomers, as well as networking sessions to connect these youth with local LGBTQ and settlement service providers.

Health & Wellbeing

Meditation workshops were offered to LGBTQ newcomer youth from the organization based in Vancouver. These sessions intend to improve the mental and emotional well-being of these youth, enabling them to better cope with anxiety, depression, and other life challenges. The meditation sessions offered by this organization also aimed to improve the spirituality of LGBTQ newcomers – this has shown to be effective in building resilience for some in this population (Alessi, 2016). There is evidence for the efficacy of meditation, including for young adults who have never meditated before (Mohan, Sharma, and Bijlani, 2011). Thus, even a casual introduction of meditation practices stands to benefit LGBTQ newcomer youth.

The LGBTQ help-line website linked to a culturally and linguistically appropriate sexual health education and outreach program for LGBTQ Asian youth in Toronto, a sexual assault survivor support program, an LGBTQ focused identity affirmation and cognitive-behavioural integrated intervention program, and other counseling services. The website indicated that they are all newcomer and refugee friendly.

Counseling and health clinics are offered or linked to by all 4 organizations, though none of these services are explicitly offered to LGBTQ newcomers. However, since these organizations either stressed a cultural and linguistic sensitive approach and/or that staff are trained on LGBTQ and newcomers needs, providers and programs associated with these organizations may be more reflexive and flexible in their execution of care.

Further Considerations

One of the organizations expressed that their services are decentralized, offering programs in libraries, schools, and community centres across the city they operate in. This is important for

youth who depend on family for transportation, especially those who are not open about their sexuality or gender identity. For example, being dropped off at a meditation workshop for LGBTQ newcomers may "out" these individuals to their kin before they are ready.

All the services offered to LGBTQ newcomer youth in this study also appear to be free of charge. This is similarly important for those youth who are financially dependent on their family and fear disclosure, or those who are in a financially precarious situation themselves. Low- or no-cost programs are more accessible for low-income families and individuals; this stands to benefit immigrants and refugees as they are likely to be at an economic disadvantage upon arrival compared to established immigrants and Canadians generally.

While two of the four organizations allowed users to translate their websites (i.e. the newcomer focused ones), none of the websites indicated that their LGBTQ newcomer targeted services are available in languages other than English. While multilingual services may be assumed for organizations targeting specific communities (e.g. the Chinese Canadian serving organization), programs open to newcomers generally, especially those that are group oriented, appear to be offered only in English. For those not proficient in English, finding potentially beneficial programs may be difficult.

Equally important to accessibility is inclusivity – low-cost, local, and linguistically diverse services will not be attractive to LGBTQ newcomer youth if they do not feel welcome. Three of the organizations that support LGBTQ newcomer youth purported to be a safe or positive space. Organizations that label themselves as such communicate that all are welcome and free to be themselves; heterosexuality and one's gender are not assumed. For LGBTQ newcomer youth that do not consider their home or school safe spaces, these organizations provide an opportunity for them to be open and receive support for their unique challenges.

Recommendations for Best Practices & Future Research

Young LGBTQ newcomers in Canada face unique challenges resulting from the intersection of their age, culture, sexuality or gender identity, and newcomer status. These challenges can negatively impact their mental health and identity development, creating barriers to a healthy and prosperous path to adulthood. For those lacking support at home and in school, the Internet is useful tool in the help seeking process that can connect them with local youth-serving organizations. We have thus far explored how inclusive and accessible youth-serving organizations in Toronto and Vancouver are towards LGBTQ newcomers and the types of services they offer to this population. Here, we build on these findings and identify what should be of focus and where improvements can be made.

Inclusivity

Regarding inclusivity of LGBTQ newcomers, the findings in this study suggest that youth-serving organizations in Toronto and Vancouver have much room for improvement. This can be achieved in multiple ways – this study used eight inclusivity metrics – and many of them require little effort on behalf of the organization.

Recommendations that are easy and appropriate for all youth-serving organizations to follow is demonstrating support for this population through the inclusion of LGBTQ-friendly images and racially diverse photos of LGBTQ persons on their website. These websites should also allow users to translate content into different languages (the more the better) – this opens more doors to linguistic minorities in the community.

An inclusion or diversity statement that mentions LGBTQ persons and newcomers should also be displayed on their website – the concept of intersectionality must be highlighted

to inform visitors that overlap exists between identities. Organizations should also provide programming for LGBTQ newcomers; if such services are beyond the scope or available resources, their website can provide links to LGBTQ-serving or settlement organizations and services.

Regardless of the organization type, programming ought to be culturally sensitive and a safe space for LGBTQ persons. To help achieve this, staff can receive training to better understand the needs and complex challenges facing young LGBTQ newcomers. If services are administered by members of the same cultural community, an assurance of confidentiality is especially important for facilitating an environment conducive to disclosure. Staff and service providers must also be reflexive in their interactions with LGBTQ newcomer youth; this involves introspection and intersubjective reflection, acknowledging one's position of power in relation to others and in society.

Throughout this investigation it became apparent that transgender persons were rarely addressed, even by organizations identified as LGBTQ friendly. While often lumped in with their LGB peers, the experiences of transgender persons are different and often more severe; they would benefit from explicit recognition, as well as programing and resources specific to them.

Accessibility

Services from organizations should be geographically and financially accessible to youth. This can be achieved through decentralized and low- or no-cost programming respectively. The organizations in this study largely offered free or inexpensive programming – it appears that many achieved this through subsidies from various levels of governments. As noted, this is

especially important for low-income families, of which newcomers make up a disproportional percentage. Governments thus ought to continue subsidizing these organizations.

Local governments can also contribute to the accessibility of these youth-serving organizations by compiling and promoting a comprehensive list of them; the sample of youth-serving organizations in this study was derived from their respective cities' websites. However, these lists are most useful when the links provided work; on the section of the City of Vancouver's website cataloguing youth-serving organizations, 67 of the 212 links (32%) were not accurate as of June 12, 2019. They either directed users to unrelated websites, the correct website but to a non-working webpage, or no website at all. For example, the link for an organization that uses arts and entertainment to promote diversity, social awareness, and resilience directs to a page full of flashy advertisements in Chinese promoting online gambling. Another organization that provides after school programs, job training, and peer mentorships has a link directing visitors to an Ontario-based real estate blog. These broken or inaccurate links create a barrier in the help-seeking process – both cities and organizations should be responsible for ensuring links are up to date.

The Role of Policy

Greater inclusivity starts with a policy that mandates it. Policies are important as they serve as a blueprint for an organization's operations – staff comply with policy in the inception, implementation, and maintenance of both programming and the website. Above all, youth-serving organizations ought to create and implement evidence informed policies that centre on inclusivity, accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and the concept of intersectionality. An intersectional approach is especially important in policy development as it "not only prevents interventions that disproportionately benefit a small subset of the population but also opens the

door to creating policy that may be far more effective in responding to all those in need (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011, p.118-119)". While some organizations had strong policies on inclusion and diversity, they did not always express their guiding principles on their websites. Failing to do so communicates to those with intersecting identities that they are overlooked or not welcome.

Additionally, government policies can affect the operations of these youth-serving organizations, especially when it comes to funding. Using Ontario as an example, a 2013 provincial report identified financial concerns as the most often mentioned operational challenge facing not-for-profits and charitable organizations – they include operating costs, insufficient operating funds, competition for limited funds, and the dependence on a single funding source or government funding (Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services [OMGCS], 2013). For meeting immediate needs, two-thirds (66%) of Ontario organizations found it very or somewhat challenging with their current revenues (OMGCS, 2013). Thus, provincial funding decisions can impact the efficacy or existence of these organizations.

Governmental policies can also serve as an example. As mentioned, one of the organizations in this study based their inclusion and diversity statement on the Ontario Human Rights Code, which prohibits discretionary actions in social areas (e.g. employment, housing, services) based on individual characteristics including – but not limited to – age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, citizenship, language spoken, and religion.

Thus, in addition to the importance of organizational policies that mandate inclusivity, we ought to pressure and elect governments that demonstrate a commitment to inclusiveness and diversity along with policies ensuring financial support for community and youth-serving organizations. This will ensure marginalized youth, including LGBTQ newcomers, have access

to inclusive and beneficial resources – for many in this population, such organizations may be their only source for support in the community.

Future Research

A surprising finding in this investigation was that in every metric, Vancouver youth-serving organizations displayed less inclusion compared to Toronto – future research should explore this disparity. Perhaps current and historical political rule in their respective provinces and cities have shaped discourse, and the degree to which these governments intervene on organizational operations (e.g. through political pressure, funding) may be dissimilar. The size of a city may also influence displays of inclusivity – Vancouver is smaller and thus there are fewer immigrants, refugees, and sexual/gender minorities. The demographics of newcomers and ethnic minorities is also more homogenous is Vancouver – 43% of persons are of Asian heritage verses 35% in Toronto (Todd, 2017). Additional cities and smaller communities should be explored as well – the geographic scope of this study is among its limitations.

Additional limitations of this study include the sample size; due to time and resource restrictions, 25% of 156 identified websites were selected for study. Further research could explore a greater number these organization websites to achieve results with a higher level of confidence. A later replication of this study can also serve as a longitudinal test to identify changes over time.

Conclusion

This study examined youth-serving organizations in Toronto and Vancouver on LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity through a two-stage content analysis of their websites. The internet is an important part of the help-seeking process for this population – it is often the first point of

contact between the individual and resources or programing, including those provided by local youth-serving organizations. These organizations can have a positive impact on the well-being of this population, providing socialization and services that can address the unique challenges which arise from their intersecting identities. Considering LGBTQ youth tend to seek online help through LGBTQ-orientated support services, and since content lacking cultural or language considerations may present a barrier for newcomers, these youth-serving organizations ought to demonstrate inclusivity of LGBTQ newcomers on their websites.

Despite some promising findings, such as a majority indicating services for newcomers, results show that very few youth-serving organizations displayed inclusion of LGBTQ newcomer youth. Failing to represent LGBTQ newcomers minimizes their challenges and excludes their voices. These organizations must do better in recognizing the existence of LGBTQ newcomers and the unique challenges they experience. This can be achieved explicitly, or implicitly by communicating the concept of intersectionality. Improvements also need to be made in explicit depictions of inclusivity, such as LGBTQ-friendly images, photos of racially diverse LGBTQ persons, and the ability to translate content into different languages.

For the few organizations that offered services to LGBTQ newcomer youth specifically, their approaches were largely consistent with the literature. They centred on culturally and linguistically sensitive care, skills development & education, socialization & building community connections, and health & well-being. Additionally, many programs were offered at low- or no-cost, and some were decentralized – this is especially important for low-income families which are disproportionally newcomers.

The responsibility of ensuring and improving inclusivity of LGBTQ newcomers in youth-serving organizations largely lies with the organization itself – they ought to create and

implement evidence informed policies that centre on inclusivity, accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and the concept of intersectionality. Doing so sets a precedent across an organization, informing the implementation and maintenance of programming, as well as the content of their website.

However, the existence and effective operation of many youth-serving organizations depends on external funding. Provincial and federal financial supports are always at risk due to politics and changing governments – austerity measures or differences in ideology may put organizational funding, and the individuals who depend on them, at risk. It is the responsibility of citizens to elect governments that demonstrate a commitment to financially and ideologically support organizations serving vulnerable youth.

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APPENDIX

Table 2. Complete results of website inclusivity sub-questions (see below), in total and by city.

Question number	Total /39		Toronto /25		Vancouver /14	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	5/	12.8%	4/	16%	1/	7.1%
2	8/	20.5%	6/	24%	2/	14.3%
3	18/	46.1%	12/	48%	6/	42.8%
4	20/	51.2%	14/	56%	6/	42.8%
5	4/	10.3%	3/	12%	1/	7.1%
6	0/	0%	0/	0%	0/	0%
7	11/	28.2%	9/	36%	2/	14.3%
8	4/	10.3%	3/	12%	1/	7.1%

Questions:

1. Is there an option to view content from the organization's website in languages other than English and French?
2. Does the organization website have LGBTQ-friendly images (e.g., rainbow flags or positive space images?).
3. Does the organization website mention or link to services for LGBTQ persons?
4. Does the organization website mention or link to services for newcomers?
5. Does the organization website mention or link to services *specifically* for LGBTQ newcomers?
6. Does the organization website mention a diversity or inclusion policy/statement that *specifically* addresses LGBTQ newcomers?
7. Does the organization website mention a diversity or inclusion policy/statement that addresses either LGBTQ persons or newcomers?
8. Does the organization website display racially diverse images of LGBTQ persons?