

‘It’s more than a sport’s facility, it’s a safety net for youth’: Exploring the Utility of Trauma-and
Violence-Informed Sport For Development (TVISFD) Programs with Maple Leaf Sports and
Entertainment’s LaunchPad

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Abstract

Throughout the last few years, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased rates of gender-based violence (GBV) that have disproportionately impacted the lives of women, girls, and gender diverse people in Canada (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2022; Illingworth & Ferrara, 2020). In a partial response to these escalating rates, a growing movement towards trauma- and violence-informed (TVI) healthcare has emerged in Canada (Wathen & Varcoe, 2019; 2021). TVI physical activity has been proposed as an effective approach to support individuals with trauma as an adjunctive treatment to usual care (Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press), with several non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—including Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment's LaunchPad (MLSE LP)—exploring how use of a Trauma- and Violence-Informed approach to Sport For Development (TVISFD) programs may support vulnerable youth. The four key tenets of TVI physical activity include building trauma and violence awareness, creating emotionally and physically safe environments, fostering opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection, and providing a strengths-based and capacity-building approach (Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press)

The objectives of this study were to use feminist participatory action research (FPAR, Reid & Frisby, 2008) to: (1) explore how the use of TVISFD programs may support women, girls and gender diverse people living in marginalized communities; and (2) examine how MLSE LP utilizes a TVI approach to help promote gender and health equity in communities that may be experiencing GBV. From November 2021 to March 2022, I conducted semi-structured interviews and demographic surveys with fifteen (n=15) participants, including: MLSE LP full-time staff, hourly youth workers, and program participants. Analysis involved an iterative process moving between the data, literature, reflexive field notes, and participant knowledge. NVivo qualitative analysis was used to support the analysis and generated themes.

Findings suggested that having community member representation amongst staff members enhanced participants' and youth workers' perceptions of safety. Key features of MLSE LP's programs that seemed to align with the tenets of TVI physical activity included: 1) creating emotionally and physically safe environments; and 2) providing a capacity-building and strengths-based approach (Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press). In addition, results revealed that MLSE LP as an organization was embedded in a heteronormative sporting structure wherein cisgender and heterosexual identities were privileged. Although gender inclusivity was discussed by participants, several interviewees positioned gender as binary and had little understanding of gender diverse identities.

I conclude by recommending that MLSE LP implement gender and sexual health training with specific attention to: 1) TVI principles; and 2) intersectional identities. Further, as participants noted, many of the youth attending MLSE LP disclosed their personal and sometimes traumatic and violent experiences to hourly staff. I thus suggest that MLSE LP prioritize formal de-escalation training for their hourly youth workers. Further research that critically explores TVI approaches in the SFD field is needed to examine how TVISFD programs contribute to—and/or hinder—opportunities for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

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Table 1. List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
CAB	Community Advisory Board
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
LP (used in conjunction with MLSE)	LaunchPad
MLSE	Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment
SFD	Sport For Development
TVI	Trauma- and Violence-Informed
TVIC	Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care
TVIPA	Trauma- and Violence-Informed Physical Activity
TVISFD	Trauma- and Violence-Informed Sport for Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
FPAR	Feminist Participatory Action Research
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
2SLGBTQ+	Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, (+) other sexual and/or gender minorities, including intersex and asexual
2SLGBTQIA+	Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, (+) other sexual and/or gender minorities

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Systemic issues require systemic responses. But they are also importantly rooted in individual experiences, and these personal experiences must inform our efforts to make change”
—Dale et al. (2021, p. 107).

The social and economic stress ignited by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities and gender-based violence (GBV) in many countries, from developing and developed economies (Dlamini, 2021). In Canada, pre-COVID-19 research shows that the levels of violence that women, girls, and gender diverse people experience have marginally changed over the past two decades (Dale et al., 2021). Indeed, the current systems of response to violence have failed to significantly lower levels of GBV (Dale et al., 2021). During COVID-19, transgender people, women, and racialized communities are bearing the brunt of the pandemic’s effects (Smythe et al., 2021). There is a growing movement to respond to increased GBV rates by integrating a Trauma- and Violence-Informed (TVI) approach to health care (TVIC; Wathen & Varcoe, 2019) and physical activity (TVIPA; Darroch et al., 2018). TVIC prioritizes safety for survivors of GBV by accounting for the intersecting impacts of trauma, violence and the broader social conditions that impact peoples’ health (Wathen & Varcoe, 2019). TVIPA uses the principles of TVIC as a tool for organizations and providers to help address health inequities through physical activity (Darroch et al., 2018; Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press). Though SFD approaches to physical activity also aim to address health inequities (Hayhurst et al., 2020; Van der Veken et al., 2020), there is minimal literature that explicitly focuses on how TVIPA is used—and taken up by/through—SFD programs.

Applying a TVI approach to the delivery of development programs enhances the quality-of-service delivery for all youth and is likely to be effective at engaging youth who may not have previously participated (Bobadilla et al., 2021). In recent years, Maple Leaf Sports and

Entertainment LaunchPad (MLSE LP), the largest sport-for-development facility in Toronto that offers development programs for youth, is spearheading research on how TVIPA is used in their SFD programs. Using SFD, the organization focuses on achieving sustainable social outcomes for youth facing barriers, asserting their commitment and mission to anti-racism, equity, and inclusion (MLSE LaunchPad, 2017a; MLSE Foundation, 2022). SFD has become a recognized strategy of social intervention in disadvantaged communities (Kidd, 2011). The SFD field is part and parcel of the broader sport for development and peace sector that examines sport as a potential contributor to development within and across local, national, and global scales (Hayhurst et al., 2021). A growing number of SFD programs have focused on using sport to contest gender norms, address GBV, and improve gender relations (Hayhurst et al., 2014). However, the notion of empowerment in these programs is often enmeshed within heteronormative narratives that seem to go unchallenged (Hayhurst et al., 2014). Further, SFD programs rarely adopt a trauma-informed approach for victims and survivors of GBV (Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019). Implementing TVIPA in SFD could thus provide a common conceptual framework that enhances efforts to integrate a multi-sector response to GBV. Despite the potential promise of Trauma- and Violence-Informed Sport For Development (TVISFD) used to prevent GBV and promote health equity in disadvantaged communities, there has been little discussion about the ways that: 1) a TVI approach is utilized to dismantle systemic and interpersonal forms of GBV, and 2) SFD programs are utilized as a social intervention to promote gender and health equity for women, girls, and gender diverse people. For this study, I used the term “gender diverse” to refer to people whose gender identity differs from social expectations based on their sex assigned at birth, including (but not limited to) transgender,

gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, queer and questioning, gender fluid, and Two-Spirit individuals.

This research aimed to explore the utility of TVIPA in SFD at MLSE LP. Through a Mitacs Accelerate Internship, I was able to develop this research project with MLSE LP and work as an intern at the organization for a four-month period. In this thesis, I describe and provide background for my Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) study that explored the use and feasibility of TVISFD at MLSE LP in supporting women, girls, and gender diverse people during COVID-19. Participants' intersectional positionalities that often conflated with their gendered experiences at LP were also explored. Additionally, I examined how TVI approaches to SFD programming at MLSE LP can promote health and gender equity in communities that may be experiencing GBV.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided my empirical inquiry into the exploration of (dis)connections between trauma-and violence-informed approaches, sport for development and gender inclusion:

- 1) How might TVI approaches to SFD programs address the challenges of women, girls, and gender diverse people living in marginalized communities?*

This question explored how TVI approaches functioned within MLSE LP's programs to minimize the potential for harm and re-traumatization in SFD for girls, women, and gender diverse people. This research aimed to specifically focus on women, girls, and gender diverse people who experienced systemic and/or interpersonal GBV with consideration given to the intersecting positionalities of youth living in marginalizing circumstances. I explored how SFD-based TVI approaches in group settings may help participants by connecting their personal

experiences to broader systems of systemic inequality. I also explored how TVI approaches to SFD programming may or may not challenge systems of oppression underlying trauma and abuse.

2) How might MLSE LP's programs help to achieve health and gender equity in communities that may be experiencing GBV?

Through this question, I explored how TVI approaches to SFD programs may help promote positive social health outcomes and gender equity. I also considered how traditional ideals of feminine and masculine behaviour—or gender norms—might impact different social determinants of health (i.e., discrimination). For example, though women may undergo sports training for the purposes of gender and sexual empowerment, women's defiance of traditional gender roles can lead to increased GBV (Hayhurst, 2014; Krumeich & Meershoek, 2014). Moreover, considering the synergistic relationship between gender and health can help to improve health and reduce health inequities (Connell, 2012), including the gender gap in physical activity (Coen et al., 2021) and SFD. Exploring the synergistic relationship between gender and health was crucial in understanding the intersecting social identities of participants and the use of SFD in reducing gender and health inequities.

3) How should SFD organizations develop TVISFD and assess whether it is an appropriate and feasible approach to support women, girls, and gender diverse people?

Lastly, through the use of community-based FPAR, this research informed novel TVI approaches for future implementation in SFD programming. This research added to the sparse literature on service user perspectives of TVI approaches to SFD programs targeting disadvantaged populations. In addition, this research question can help inform the development of TVI sports programming for other youth programs across Canada that promote safe sport. In

the following section I describe the importance and relevance of exploring TVIPA in SFD programs to support women, girls, and gender diverse people that may be experiencing GBV.

1.2 Justification and Rationale

As noted earlier, SFD programs that work with victims and survivors of GBV rarely integrate a TVI approach. At the same time, literature on GBV has primarily focused on women and children (Carlson 2000; Decker et al., 2013). This highlights the need for future SFD research to integrate a TVI approach and explore the experiences of other persons at risk of increased violence based on their perceived gender, gender expression and/or identity. Intersectional perspectives of GBV—and its connection to other interlocking and mutually reinforcing systems of oppression, power, and inequity—are often overlooked in GBV research and analyses (Gill, 2018). In addition, SFD programs have reinforced hegemonic gendered assumptions about gender relations that often construct GBV in SFD programs as violence against women (Hayhurst et al., 2014). I addressed this gap in SFD-related GBV research and analysis by utilizing key concepts of intersectionality to interrogate how gender is constructed at MLSE LP and its implications for GBV prevention.

Previous literature highlights two major challenges in the work of GBV recovery, managing post-trauma stress symptoms and coping with the demands of everyday life, such as housing, food, clothing, and medical needs (Vidu et al., 2021). However, SFD programs that aim to manage post-traumatic symptoms in persons experiencing GBV often refer to these approaches as trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive, rather than the nuanced term TVI (e.g., Kahan et al., 2020 and van Ingen, 2011). The expansion of trauma-informed approaches to include “and violence” is an important change in language that emphasizes the connections between trauma and violence (Ponic et al., 2016). TVI approaches recognize the connections

between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes and behaviours (Bobadilla et al., 2021; Darroch et al., 2018; Ponc et al., 2016; Wathen & Varcoe, 2019). Using TVIC in physical activity organizations is referred to as Trauma- and Violence-Informed Physical Activity (TVIPA; Darroch et al., 2018; Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press). Research has demonstrated that TVIPA can be used as a tool for organizations and providers to help address health inequities through physical activity (Darroch et al., 2018; Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press). Though SFD approaches often employ physical activity, leisure, recreation and sport to address health inequities (Hayhurst et al., 2020; Van der Veken et al., 2020), few studies focus explicitly on how inequities are directly addressed by/through SFD for those directly affected by violence and trauma (Darroch et al., 2020). While some SFD scholarship has focused on populations that have experienced trauma and health inequities (e.g., Spaaij et al., 2019; McSweeney, 2022), these studies did not engage with a TVI approach. Additionally, researchers have yet to explore how a TVI approach can be used in SFD programs and the potential health benefits associated with TVISFD. It is thus imperative to develop a conceptual understanding of how TVIPA can inform and be applied to SFD programs.

This study builds on current work by van Ingen (2016) and Darroch et al., (2022)—but more blatantly examines the specific use of TVIPA in relation to youth-focused SFD programs, with a deliberate eye to how TVISFD programming may function to prevent GBV and promote health and gender equity. While studies have explored the impact of violence against minority women and its negative health effects (Sabri, et al., 2013; Sabri & Granger, 2018), few researchers have studied the adverse health effects associated with GBV present in gender diverse people. The majority of SFD research has imparted a heteronormative framework that prevents nuanced understandings of how sexuality and gender impact SFD programming

(Carney & Chawansky, 2016). Heteronormative frameworks dominate the current body of SFD research and silence nuanced discussions around queer sexualities within SFD research and practice (Carney & Chawansky, 2016). In addition, social structures generally recreate dynamics of exclusion for marginalized communities (Gil et al., 2021). Expanding research on TVI approaches SFD programming presents an opportunity to transform sport spaces—which tend to act as a microcosm of the world and society as a whole—into more inclusive and supportive environments for marginalized identities, including gender diverse people. Herein, trauma- and violence-exposed youth could benefit significantly from what sports-based interventions provide (D’Andrea et al., 2013). Research has shown that physical activity can be a useful adjunct to common mental healthcare practices (i.e., talk therapy, medication) to improve health outcomes for disadvantaged communities (Darroch et al., 2020). In turn, partaking in TVISFD may be of particular importance for people who have experienced GBV.

Within a patriarchal economy, feminine qualities are associated with subordination, making those who adopt or express femininity “less than” (Hoskin, 2020). Violence against femininity is a form of GBV that can affect women, girls, and other people that identify or express their gender as feminine. The devaluation and subordination of femininity has been characterized as a serious social problem in Canada, wherein two of the largest massacres over the last 40 years have been explicitly misogynistic attacks targeting women and gay people in Toronto’s 2SLGBTQ+ community, and Indigenous women and girls (Hoskin, 2020). This study centred the experiences of people at heightened a risk of GBV, including racialized women and girls and gender diverse people in Moss Park, Toronto. Additionally, this research built on—and expanded—current SFD research by exploring the experiences of different gender and sexual identities (see Carney & Chawansky, 2016). As I explain further in the methodology section

below—the key principles of FPAR were employed throughout the proposed research “to promote the engagement of participants in an inclusive debate on issues relevant to them” (Tolhurst et al, 2012, p. 1826). Finally, this study used intersectionality and intersectional feminist theoretical approaches to explore the use of SFD in addressing GBV and health inequities, reporting on the multiple ways TVI approaches to SFD can help or hinder gender and health equity for marginalized communities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender-based violence (GBV) rates and describe how COVID-19 has impacted physical activity levels. I then discuss GBV as it relates to violence against the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Next, I describe how SFD programs function to promote gender and health equity. I then outline how TVIC and TVIPA can support survivors and victims of GBV. Finally, I detail how both TVIPA and SFD practices aim to foster safe space and how these practices can be used in conjunction.

2.1 Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19

Violence has generally been found to increase globally in times of emergency (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2020), especially crises involving quarantine (John et al., 2020). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, extended quarantine and physical distancing measures raised concerns for the increased vulnerability to GBV (Erskine, 2020). GBV is defined as violence against people based on their gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender (Cotter & Savage, 2019).

Although necessary to combat COVID-19, social distancing practices “carry unintended consequences that ripple across social problems (Rieger et al., 2022, p. 471). In a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (Illingworth & Ferrara, 2020),

stakeholders expressed their concern over the evidence of the gendered impacts of the pandemic in Canada—for instance, women are experiencing increased violence, taking on expanded caregiving responsibilities, and make up the majority of front-line healthcare and social workers. Further, stakeholders indicated an increase in violence against people who identify as Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender minorities (2SLGBTQ+) since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Illingworth & Ferrara, 2020). In a recent study conducted in British Columbia by Smythe et al. (2021), participants working with 2SLGBTQ+ communities noted that transgender people were placed at a much higher risk of violence during the pandemic because it was more difficult for them to access safer spaces and appropriate services. This is consistent with other research in Canada that showed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the risk of GBV faced by already vulnerable communities that have the least access to services—including Indigenous, racialized, Black, gender non-conforming, transgender, people with disabilities, migrant people, and people living in remote and rural areas (Dale et al., 2021). For example, China's Hubei Province recorded a tripling of domestic violence (a type of GBV) reports during COVID-19 quarantine in February 2020 (John et al. 2020). Other outbreaks such as Ebola, cholera, and Zika have also led to increased cases of domestic violence (Mittal & Singh, 2020). In addition, and due to breakdowns in social infrastructure and compounding current weaknesses and conflicts, studies have documented how existing gender inequalities tend to worsen in pandemic situations (Mittal & Singh, 2020).

In the United States, increases in GBV rates followed the 2008 economic crisis; September 11, 2001; Hurricane Katrina; and now, COVID-19. The increase in GBV cases in times of emergency can partially be attributed to confinement in physical spaces and economic

strain (John et al., 2020). During the Ebola outbreak in 2014–2016, “women and girls in Africa experienced more sexual violence, coercion, and exploitation” (John et al. 2020, p. 66). Much like COVID-19, the Ebola epidemic exposed some of the structural realities faced by women and girls that point to gendered inequities in socio-economic and health systems. This begs the question, why do gendered forms of oppression heighten in times of crisis? Rosenfeld & Tomiyama (2020) suggested that the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic may have led people to endorse socially conservative ideologies, including traditional gender role conformity.

Endorsing socially conservative ideologies reflects a preference for stability over change, and adopting a conservative ideology may have enabled individuals to manage feelings of threat and anxiety (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2020). Indeed, focusing on traditional values and gender stereotypes may have helped individuals maintain social order during environmental turmoil and existential threat (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2020). As a result, the pandemic may then lower an individual’s threshold for gender ambiguity tolerance, causing them to have increasing value for compliance with gender binary norms and traditional beliefs about gender (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2020). Gender inequality, often conflated with the subordinated status and devaluation of femininity (Hoskin, 2020), is one of the main drivers of GBV (Dlamini, 2021). Further, gender roles and normative expectations of gender that have situated women to have less social and political status than men perpetuate the acceptability of GBV amongst communities (Ali & Naylor, 2013). Women facing intersecting oppressions are more vulnerable to GBV, and often find themselves facing unaddressed institutional racism and health disparities (Dlamini, 2021).

The social and economic stress brought on by the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing social norms and gender inequality (Dlamini, 2021). Increased GBV rates ignited by the

pandemic pointed to the need for contingent mitigating mechanisms to protect the marginalized (Dlamini, 2021), where intersecting social identities of vulnerability are given equal attention. As many institutions, infrastructures, and policy reforms are undertaking changes in response to COVID-19, it is crucial to approach this restructuring in a gender-sensitive way to allocate resources for GBV (UNDP, 2020). In the following section, I describe the nature of GBV as it relates to experiences of violence against 2SLGBTQ+ people.

2.2 Gender-Based Violence: Considering 2SLGBTQ+ Persons' Experiences

GBV has often been characterized as “violence against women,” centring women’s experiences due to their heightened risk of GBV. Modifications to the word “woman,” such as “woman-identifying” or “female-identifying,” have appeared in recent years as an attempt to be inclusive of women who were not assigned female at birth (Sturgis et al., 2021). However, adding the suffix “-identifying” can signal there is a difference between a “real” woman and a person who “identifies” as a woman (Sturgis et al., 2021). Moreover, assuming violence more greatly affects women and those who identify as women ignores the heightened risk of GBV experienced by gender diverse people, including Two-Spirit, non-binary, and transgender people. Indeed, women, girls, and gender diverse people are at a heightened risk of GBV, and some are at higher risk due to the additional discrimination they face, such as racialized women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, trans and non-binary people, and women who are unhoused or underhoused (Canadian Women’s Foundation [CWF], 2022). Social identities that face additional and *intersecting* forces of oppression are at heightened risk of GBV, such that violence against women of colour is frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1991).

Violence that is “gender-based” is entangled with racist, homophobic, transphobic, heterosexist, and other forms of violence (Bows & Fileborn, 2020). Further, GBV stems from hegemonic gender role expectations comprised of violence that reinforces unequal power relations between masculine and feminine gender identities (Christensen, 2019; Bloom, 2008). While research on GBV against 2SLGBTQ+ people is still in its relative infancy, findings on sexual and intimate partner violence experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ people suggest that members of these communities encounter violence at rates similar to, if not higher than, cisgender heterosexual women (Bows & Fileborn, 2020). Much of the violence encountered by women and 2SLGBTQ+ people in public spaces is dismissed as “minor” and rendered as non-violence (Bows & Fileborn, 2020). For example, the routine occurrences of street harassment encountered by women and 2SLGBTQ+ communities are rarely captured in surveys as crime and violence and rarely responded to in policy and legislation (Fileborn & Vera-Gray, 2017). Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community are subjected to escalating degrees of bias-motivated violence from a relatively young age (Smyth et al., 2014). The 2SLGBTQ+ community experiences high rates of violence, though the community is far from homogenous, and rates of violence differ within and across groups (Bows & Fileborn, 2020). For instance, transgender women—especially transgender women of colour—experience alarming rates of GBV (Bows & Fileborn, 2020). A recent Canadian survey showed that 65% of transgender people have experienced domestic violence (Wathen et al., 2015). The patterned nature of violence against these groups is connected to a binary sex-gender system in which heterosexuality and heterosexism are defined as normative (Bartlett 2007; Smyth et al., 2014). Countries in the global North and global South have failed to translate wider debates in contemporary feminist theory to policy makers and practitioners, resulting in the use of biologically static male/female binary (sex) measures as

proxies of “gender” (Tolhurst et al., 2012). However, the use of biologically static male/female binary measures as proxies of gender does not accurately capture the experiences of persons that do not conform to their assigned gender at birth. Many studies assume peoples’ gender identities based on the assessment of their sexual orientation; for instance, assuming someone is cisgender if they are in a heterosexual relationship (Calton et al., 2015). This fails to consider that the persons who identify as genderqueer can engage in heterosexual relationships (Calton et al., 2015). As a result, little is known about the prevalence of GBV and patterns of help seeking in gender diverse communities (Calton et al., 2015).

Crossing the gender binary (i.e., gender nonconformity) is associated with violence and discrimination experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ (Hoskin, 2020). Heterosexism positions activities referred to as “gender variant” as significant deviations from “the norm” and deserving of social sanctions, sometimes in the form of violence (Smyth et al., 2014). This suggests that gender nonconformity may be a facet of discrimination that has not been fully articulated or addressed (Hoskin, 2020). In addition, while feminist research has addressed the systemically unequal treatment of women, oftentimes the blame for their unequal treatment is placed on femininity itself, rather than the ways in which femininity has been devalued and understood within a masculinist-patriarchal framework (Hoskin, 2020). Indeed, hegemonic ideals of gender have constructed femme and femininity as being inferior. Moreover, femininity may also be a facet of discrimination (Hoskin, 2020).

Sexual violence against boys and men is often not constructed as GBV, although it may have strong gender dimensions associated with femininity, including violence against boys and men who are viewed as feminine in any way (Tolhurst et al., 2012; Hoskin, 2020). Indeed, perceptions of femininity as being inferior contribute to sexual harassment and targeting for

homophobic violence (Hoskin, 2020). It should be noted, however, that sexual violence against boys and men has not often been constructed as GBV. Transgressions of gender norms and gender non-conforming expressions are less socially acceptable amongst men than women and are thus more likely to provoke discrimination and self-exclusion (Braumüller et al., 2020).

When compared to masculine individuals who were assigned female at birth, individuals who were assigned male at birth and expressed femininity were at a greater risk of bullying, ridicule, and rejection from peer activities (Hoskin, 2020). This suggests a societal tendency to police femininity over masculinity (Hoskin, 2020). The literature has yet to explore the devaluation and regulation of femininity and gender non-conformity as it pertains to GBV. Herein, further research is needed to address the intersecting role of anti-femininity and gender nonconformity as it pertains to peoples' experiences of GBV. In the next section, I briefly discuss how social isolation during COVID-19 has impacted physical (in)activity.

2.3 Physical Inactivity and COVID-19

Staying at home during the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with a considerable rise in domestic violence—a type of GBV. This may have been related to the negative emotions that developed secondary to social isolation, the uncertainty with life during the pandemic, and physical inactivity (Ali & Kunugi, 2020). During the pandemic, levels of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour substantially increased (Peçanha et al., 2020). The preventative measures of COVID-19 (social distancing, social isolation) have caused concern for a future where people continue to move less and as a result experience a poorer health trajectory (Ali & Kunugi, 2020). On that note, TVIPA practices—wherein service providers understand the traumatic impacts of global crises and the associated increase in GBV rates—may respond to physical inactivity, GBV, and health-related concerns amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally,

limited research exists on the experiences of gender diverse young people in physical activity contexts and how these young people navigate such spaces (Storr et al., 2022). At the same time, recent scholarship has shown that experiences of exclusion and discrimination (i.e., homophobia and transphobia) in sport and physical activity environments also negatively impacts gender diverse young people's engagement levels in physical activity later in adulthood (Storr et al., 2022). The potential of SFD to help mitigate poor physical health experienced by many young gender diverse people has been underlined in research that emphasizes how participation in SFD improves physical activity and health outcomes (LeCrom et al., 2019).

Research by Hall et al. (2021) on COVID-19 and the global trend of physical inactivity argued that physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour has long been an issue, and while of a different nature, the world was dealing with a pandemic of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour for several years before COVID-19. Admittedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted and accelerated the crisis of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour (Hall et al., 2021). Many opportunities to be physically active have been suspended due to COVID-19 safety measures, including school-based physical education and athletic programs, fitness centres, and public parks (Hall et al., 2021). Higher levels of physical activity are associated with lower levels of societal isolation (Hall et al., 2021). At the same time, the lack of ability to engage in physical activity comes with an absence in opportunity for social interaction, and thus decreased physical inactivity poses a threat to the social, mental, and physical well-being of individuals (Hall et al., 2021). Moreover, implementing TVI approaches to SFD in may address what has been characterized by Hall et al. (2021) as a pandemic of physical inactivity, as well as support victims and survivors of GBV during and post COVID-19. Below, I describe how the SFD field

has aimed to address gender and health inequity by increasing gender and health equitable opportunities.

2.4 Sport For Development (SFD): Gender and Health Equity Perspectives

The use of sports programs to achieve non-sport outcomes such as gender equity education, conflict resolution, community capacity building, and in this case, gender and health equity, is referred to as SFD (Seal & Sherry, 2018). SFD programs have been associated with a variety of physical and social benefits, such as building critical competencies (i.e., self-esteem), that contribute to a range of positive developmental outcomes (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2017). SFD programs have used combative sports, such as boxing and martial arts, in combination with GBV-prevention strategies to empower participants with the knowledge and skills to feel safe (Hayhurst, 2014; van Ingen, 2011). The SFD sector has also employed the use of non-combative sports, such as soccer, to facilitate the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equity, and other development goals (Hayhurst et al., 2018). SFD programs, most often run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been implemented in regions enduring health pandemics, major gender divisions, and other social crises that have a great impact on youth (Collison et al., 2017). SFD programs that are designed to pursue development-related goals are sometimes referred to as “plus sport” programs (Steinmann, et al., 2021). These differ from “sport plus” programs, which assume sport will itself lead to development outcomes (Steinmann et al., 2021). MLSE LP views sport and physical activity as powerful tools to teach employment skills and uses “plus sport” programs to focus on individual development with a secondary focus on community development (Warner et al., 2020).

SFD programs can deliver information about health, body functioning, disease, and hygiene (Meier, 2000). This knowledge is especially valuable when reaching girls and women

with little education and few economic advantages, “in order to have more control over their own lives, in particular regarding pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment or prostitution” (Meier, 2000, p. 10). Most studies examining the sport, gender, and development nexus have pointed to lack of resources and poverty as the main barriers for women and girls to access these programs and participate in sport, highlighting the importance for future sports programming aimed at addressing intersectional and relational theories of masculinities and femininities (Hayhurst, 2014).

Indeed, SFD programs have aimed to challenge gender and health inequities by improving gender relations and reducing GBV. It is important to note that SFD programs focus on addressing inequities rather than inequalities. Inequities are different from inequalities, as the latter may be unavoidable because of genetics differences, social and economic conditions, or personal lifestyles (Salamati & Naji, 2016). Health promotion focuses on achieving equity in health to decrease differences in health status and provide equal opportunities and resources to strengthen all people (Salamati & Naji, 2016). Moreover, challenging gender and health inequities is the process of achieving gender and health equality. Despite an effort to resist and challenge gender inequities, SFD programs remain entrenched within heteronormative narratives that assume gender and sex as binary and exclude gender identities that do not neatly fit into this binary system. As such, transgender athletes are “Othered” in sport due to their gender identity not matching the institutionalized way that sport has been traditionally organized (Cunningham, 2012, as cited in Braumüller et al., 2020). The notion of “Othered” is rooted in the hegemonic ideology and binary categorization that justifies discrimination of people and groups (Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016, p. 84). Further, “concepts of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity have been identified as important determinants for LGBT+ discrimination”

(Braumüller et al., 2020, p. 13). Recognizing this, if SFD programs aim to foster gender equity, program leaders should challenge heteronormative ways of thinking about gender and interrogate hegemonic masculinity. Moreover “programs need to consider how the relational element of gender (both within and outside of sport) can be attended to by programs interested in using sport for social change” (Chawansky, 2011, p. 133). While the pandemic has presented enormous challenges, it has also created opportunities for growth and change within sport organizations (Dixon et al., 2020). Through viewing COVID-19 as a turning point with opportunities and constraints for SFD organizations, we can further our understanding of the live experiences of SFD participants (Dixon et al., 2020).

2.5 TVIC, TVIPA, and GBV Prevention

Preventing and addressing GBV requires an effort based on a community development model in which sources of support for victims and survivors collaborate and coordinate, including formal networks like institutional resources and services, informal social networks, and the victims and survivors themselves (Goodman et al., 2016; Koegler et al., 2019; Vidu et al., 2021). TVIC is a healthcare approach that can be used for health and social service organizations and providers to prioritize safety for survivors of GBV prevention (Wathen & Varcoe, 2019). TVIC expands on trauma-informed care by accounting for the intersecting impacts of systemic and interpersonal violence and structural inequities on a person’s life (Wathen et al., 2021). Including the term “violence” helps to remind practitioners that trauma extends beyond events such as accidents and natural disasters to interpersonal violence such as physical and sexual abuse, and explicitly recognizes structural aspects of trauma: discriminatory systems, structural barriers, harmful institutional practices, and historic and current inequities (Cullen et al., 2021). Scholars have called for an important shift in language by referring to practice as trauma- and

violence-informed (TVI), rather than only trauma-informed, to bring into focus acts of violence and their traumatic impacts on victims (Browne et al., 2015; Ponio et al., 2016). Authors in the field of trauma and violence have articulated four principles and strategies of TVI approaches to healthcare (Wathen & Varcoe, 2019), practice and policy (Ponio et al., 2016), service delivery (Bobadilla et al., 2021), and physical activity (Darroch et al., 2018):

1. Understand and build awareness of trauma and violence, and its impact on peoples' lives and behaviours.
2. Create emotionally and physically safe environments for participants and providers.
3. Foster opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection.
4. Provide strengths-based and capacity-building approaches to support coping and resilience.

Trauma and Violence Informed Physical Activity (TVIPA) uses the four key tenets of TVIC to prevent re-traumatization of participants and staff involved in physical activity programs (Darroch et al., in press). TVIPA may thus be used as a tool for SFD organizations and staff members to ensure their facility considers and accounts for social and structural inequities that impact community members. Using TVIPA may improve health outcomes, mediate GBV-related post-traumatic symptoms, and could be an effective adjunctive therapy with mental health treatment (Darroch et al., 2020). Given that TVIPA is central to this research, I briefly describe each tenet of a TVI approach below, including building awareness and understanding, creating emotionally and physically safe environments, fostering opportunities for choice, collaboration and connection, and providing strengths-based and capacity-building approaches.

2.5.1 Building Awareness and Understanding

A movement toward TVI approaches has developed largely in response to a growing understanding of the connections between violence, trauma, and negative physical and mental health outcomes (Ponic et al., 2016; Poole & Greaves, 2012). In the context of violence, trauma can be acute, resulting from a single event, or complex, resulting from repeated experiences of interpersonal and/or systemic violence (Ponic et al., 2016). While modern systems are less blatant in their perpetuation of violence, policies and practices can continue to harm victims and survivors of GBV, sometimes subtly and inadvertently (Ponic et al., 2016). For instance, providers who fail to understand the complex and lasting impacts of violence and trauma may unintentionally re-traumatize service users (Ponic et al., 2016). In turn, when systems and service providers who work with victims and survivors of GBV lack an understanding of the complex and lasting impacts of violence and trauma, they risk causing further harm (Ponic et al., 2016). Put differently, a TVI approach does not require disclosures of trauma; instead, those who provide TVIC recognize that traumatic experiences shape an individual's identity and contributes the way they experience interactions, structures, and systems (Darroch et al., in press; Wathen et al., 2021). For that reason, TVIPA calls for physical activity providers to account for individual, institutional, structural, and systemic inequities (Darroch et al., in press). For instance, Hayhurst et al., (2014) found that structural barriers such as time, financial constraints, and power relations can impede on the benefits of SFD programs. In turn, using TVIPA to build awareness and understanding of structural inequities in SFD initiatives may help to address barriers to participating in SFD faced by women, girls, and gender diverse people.

2.5.2 Creating Emotionally and Physically Safe Environments

Individuals with experiences of trauma and/or violence need to feel physically, socially, and emotionally safe when engaging with service providers (Darroch et al., 2018). Indeed, “safety and trustworthiness denote the importance of welcoming, and confidential spaces that are physically, emotionally, and culturally safe as identified by participants” (Darroch et al., 2022, p. 31). Put differently, a TVI approach emphasizes emotional, physical, and cultural safety—care that is offered in a manner that is respectful of, and explicitly accounts for, individual’s culture and beliefs (Darroch et al., in press). Hence, TVIPA practices create safe, non-violent environments and supportive approaches that may help to address health inequities and remove barriers to physical activity participation for women experiencing marginalizing circumstances (Darroch et al., 2018; Darroch et al., in press). By prioritizing safety and emphasizing sensitivity to the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors in the delivery of programming, TVIPA can foster safety and avoid re-traumatization (Darroch et al., in press). Taking this into account, TVIPA can be used in SFD to facilitate safe and respectful environments for service users that may be experiencing GBV.

2.5.3 Fostering Opportunities for Choice, Collaboration, and Connection

Offering opportunities for participants and staff to make authentic choices through connection and collaboration is an essential pillar to a TVI approach (Wathen & Varcoe, 2021). “Choice and collaboration reference the importance of involving participants, where possible, in identifying physical activities, determining strategies for engagement, and providing supportive decision-making, and clear information and expectations of physical activity programming” (Darroch et al., 2022, p. 31). Herein, a TVI approach should involve participants in program planning and have policies and procedures that allow for flexibility (Wathen & Varcoe, 2021).

Additionally, TVIPA recognizes participants as experts on their own lives, bodies, choices, and personal capacity and ensures participants are given opportunities for collaboration (Darroch et al., in press). Concrete strategies used in TVIPA to enhance opportunities for choice and collaboration include using inclusive and supportive language, actively listening to participants, engaging with a non-judgemental attitude, providing alternative techniques, supporting participants' own decision making, and acknowledging that participants may not want to receive feedback [from coaches] (Darroch et al., in press). Herein, SFD programs can use TVIPA strategies to enhance opportunities for choice, connection, and collaboration for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

2.5.4 Providing Strengths-Based and Capacity Building Approaches

Previous scientific literature highlights two major challenges in the work of gender-based violence recovery: managing post-trauma stress symptoms and coping with the demands of everyday life, such as housing, food, clothing, and medical needs (Vidu et al., 2021). A TVI approach finds and builds on people's strengths while acknowledging the effects of past and current experiences of trauma and violence on their lives (Wathen & Varcoe, 2021). The strengths-based and capacity-building tenet emphasizes that programs need to be tailored to the specific needs of the community to reinforce self-care, confidence, and social connections, which subsequently strengthens communities' abilities to cope with trauma (Darroch et al., 2022; Darroch et al., in press). In turn, TVIPA leverages physical activity as a strategy to address dysregulated stress responses and build individuals' emotional and social capacity (Darroch et al., in press). Literature on TVIPA has explored the use of TVIPA in supporting women who have experienced trauma (Darroch et al., 2018; Darroch et al., 2022). However, there has been limited exploration on the use of TVIPA in supporting gender diverse people and their ability to

cope with trauma and violence. The study herein aimed to add to the current body of literature on TVIPA by exploring how TVISFD programs may support and strengthen women, girls, *and* gender diverse people's abilities to cope with trauma and violence, specifically GBV. In the following section, I discuss how SFD and TVIPA practices both aim to cultivate safe spaces for their providers and users.

2.6 Cultivating Safe Space: Exploring TVIPA and SFD Safe Space Practices

TVIPA aims to create safe environments for clients based on understanding the effects of trauma and violence and its links to health and behaviours (Darroch et al., 2018). In turn, TVIPA can provide physical activity programs in a manner that is welcoming and safe for people that may be experiencing GBV. Additionally, SFD organizers have recognized the need to prioritize physically safe and secure environments, especially in communities that may be experiencing high levels of public violence (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Considering this, incorporating TVIPA to SFD safe space practices may improve program delivery and enhance the safety of all service users, whether or not they have experienced GBV. The shift to TVI SFD and physical activity practices parallels the shift to cultural safety, an approach to working across ethnic and other differences to ensure that service environments are safe for everyone, regardless of expressed or assumed culture; both putting the onus on systems to make policies and practices safer and creating opportunity for service providers to optimize support for victims (Ponic et al., 2016). Without incorporating a TVI lens in SFD programs, we are likely to miss opportunities to provide safe spaces for marginalized communities that may be experiencing GBV.

The sociocultural dimension of safe space is based on familiarity and acceptance such that participants feel comfortable, at home, and supported (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). This sociocultural dimension resonates with the notion that cultural safety is a subjective experience

in which the individual determines whether programs feel safe (Cullen et al., 2021). The broader challenge here is to ensure all people feel a part of the program they participate in and are able to experience a sense of belonging within it regardless of their social locations (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). While SFD can be used for social change, some community members may experience exclusion and alienation if they do not feel safe, in which case these programs are unlikely to transform social relations (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Despite an absence in the literature regarding the impact of TVIPA in SFD programs, there is growing evidence that shows exercise improves post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, as well as physical and mental health outcomes (Darroch et al., 2020; Pebole et al., 2021). TVIPA prioritizes individuals with experiences of trauma and/or violence and their need to feel physically, socially, and emotionally safe when engaging with service providers (Darroch et al., 2018). Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) conceptualize four dimensions of safe space in SFD programs—physical, psychological/affective, sociocultural, and political. In turn, “a space is safe when individuals can freely participate and express their identities and individuality without fear of physical or psychological danger, censure, exclusion, or exploitation” (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014, p. 6). Considering this, to establish a safe space for all clients and providers, SFD programs must prioritize the experiences of social identities that are most marginalized, such as racialized women and girls and 2SLGBTQ+ identities. In addition, TVIC emphasizes that “many systems of response to violence are, themselves, contributors to patriarchal, racist, colonial, and heteronormative structures and systems” (Scott & Jenney, 2022, p. 3). To this end, SFD programs can utilize TVIPA practices to help acknowledge intersecting oppressions and create service environments that are safe for everyone. As I articulate below, my intersectionality and

intersectional feminist theoretical lenses were also used to account for the intersecting social identities of research participants.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Theoretical Approach

This research was grounded in a constructionist epistemology wherein knowledge is viewed as being “contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and is developed and transmitted with an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Constructionists argue that all knowledge is “constructed” through our interactions with others. I used this epistemology to investigate how gender has been constructed through traditional programming and practices at MLSE LP. Working from this position, I spend the following sections describing key concepts of intersectionality and intersectional feminist theory, the theoretical frameworks underpinning my research.

3.1.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality was used in this study for critically exploring the diverse ways gender overlapped with and connected to race, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and other minority identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Gill, 2018). Foregrounding how different social identities intersect requires a distinct methodological approach to the study of health status and health systems, which often tend to assume a primary male/female sex and gender binary (Tolhurst et al., 2012). An intersectional approach underlines how gender intersects with multiple social divisions and inequalities (race/ethnicity, class, nationality, age, sexuality, dis/ability, and religion) to create specific positionalities in relation to power (Tolhurst et al., 2012). Race, gender, and other identity categories are often treated in liberal discourse as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude those who are “different” (Crenshaw, 1991). As Crenshaw

(1991) stated, “in the context of violence against women, this elision of difference in identity politics is problematic because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class” (p. 1242). Where systems of race, gender, and class domination converge, intervention strategies based solely on the experiences of women who do not share the same class or racial backgrounds will be of limited help to those who, because of race and class, face different obstacles (Crenshaw, 1991). Moreover, when considering how TVISFD might address gender equity, GBV, and other challenges faced by community members, it was important to consider intersectionality in relation to how the racialized, gendered, and class identities of my participants (most of whom were women of colour) uniquely impacted their experiences at MLSE LP. To overcome the limitations of gender as a single category, intersectionality examines the relationships among multiple dimensions of social relations (Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005).

Intersectionality does not take an additive approach to describe the impacts of gender, race, and class. Instead, intersectionality focuses on examining how structural forces and social locations interact to shape and influence human life and experience (Hankivsky, 2012; Misra, 2021). Intersectional researchers explicitly deconstruct categories to articulate the broader structural dynamics that are experienced in the lives of participants (McCall, 2005, p. 1783; Misra et al., 2021). As a result, these findings deconstruct taken-for-granted understandings of gendered identities (Misra et al., 2021). Intersectionality explains how social organizations shape our lives and opens the possibility that groups may simultaneously experience the effects of privilege and penalty, thus challenging binary thinking, which tends to pose certain groups in opposition of others (e.g., women/men; Hankivsky, 2012). In this vein, Hankivsky (2012) has described multiple identifiable central theoretical tenets of intersectionality:

Human lives cannot be reduced to single characteristics; human experience cannot be accurately understood by prioritizing any one single factor or constellation of factors; social categories such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and ability are socially constructed, fluid, and flexible; and social locations are inseparable and shaped by the interacting and mutually constituting social processes and structures that are influenced by both time and place (p. 1713).

Scholars who have taken up intersectionality have incorporated data from women of different racial-ethnic and class backgrounds to advance their intersectional project (Naples, 2009). In line with this, I incorporated data from women of diverse racial-ethnic and class backgrounds to reflect the power of intersectional analysis. Taking an intersectional approach to health and physical activity research pushes beyond a singular sex/gender system to explore the simultaneity of race, class, and shifting gender relations. Research in the field of violence show that violence against women is not solely a matter of gendered power relations, but is instead co-constructed with racial and class stratification, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression (Misra et al., 2021). It is only within the past 20 years that researchers have considered the impacts of race, culture, and ethnicity on how GBV is perpetrated or prevented (Field & Caetano, 2004; Bent-Goodley, 2001). Overall, I utilized key concepts of intersectionality throughout the research process to aid in understanding gendered experiences of my participants that may be experiencing or have experienced violence.

3.1.2 Intersectional Feminism

Intersectional feminist scholars have highlighted the importance of examining the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in capturing the experiences of women and others who have been marginalized in academic research (Naples, 2016). This form of

intersectionality foregrounds the ways in which experience shapes knowledge and reflects the feminist praxis that gave rise to the concept of intersectionality (Naples, 2009). In an era where popular feminism is white, middle-class, cis-gendered, and heterosexual (Banet-Weiser, 2018), I utilize an intersectional feminist approach that considers intersectional oppressions and the historical subordination of women in society. Neoliberal feminist concerns center categorical gender comparisons between men and women and intersectional feminist activism is essentially erased (Cooky & Antunovic, 2020). In an attempt to move away from liberal and neoliberal articulations of feminism, it was important to reflexively engage with my own positionality and understandings of feminism as a white woman in relation to MLSE LP's antiracist approach to programming, and critically sit with the feminist tensions as and when they arise as I navigated the relationship between these perspectives (Hayhurst et al., 2021). As stated by Crenshaw (1991):

The failure of feminism to interrogate race means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of colour, and the failure of antiracism to interrogate the patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently reproduce the subordination of women (p. 1252).

Considering most of my research participants were racialized and all identified as women, it was important to consider my intersectional feminist approach and foreground how white feminism subordinates and marginalizes women of color. Further, it was pertinent to critically interrogate MLSE LP's anti-racist approach to programming and decipher how anti-racism may also reproduce the subordination of women of colour.

I engaged with the key tenets of intersectional feminism that identify embedded relations of power, wherein interlocking social locations (i.e., race, gender, social class, sexuality, and so

on) are examined such that the simultaneous operation of domination and subordination, and privilege and oppression, are taken seriously (Cooky & Antunovic, 2020). This, in turn, helped evaluate how MLSE LP is attending to the intersecting social identities of participants and promoting gender and health equity within the community.

Social norms and practices that situate women to have less social and political status than men perpetuate the acceptability of GBV amongst communities (Christensen, 2019). For instance, social policies that place gender-based limits to resources such as education, healthcare, or divorce, raise the risk of GBV (Christensen, 2019). I will therefore use articulations of feminism that advocate for structural changes that challenge systemic forms of gender inequality, rather than advocate for the inclusion of minorities into existing structural arrangements that perpetuate social norms and practices (Cooky & Antunovic, 2020). Thus, an intersectional feminist approach to GBV prevention is needed to interrogate gendered norms in challenging violence mainly perpetrated by men (Tolhurst et al., 2012). Intersectional feminism was useful in understanding the ways in which heterosexism, racism, and patriarchy have shaped conceptualizations of GBV, and to describe the unique vulnerability of women, girls, and gender diverse people to converging systems of domination. Using intersectional feminism and intersectionality theoretical perspectives contributed to my overall understanding of participants' lived experiences situated in historically marginalized communities. In the following section, I contextualize this research by describing the project's environmental landscape.

2.2 Research Landscape

My research project has been supported by an E-Alliance: Research hub for gender+ equity in sport-funded grant between York University, Carleton University, and MLSE LP with Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst (she/her) as the Lead Researcher, and Dr. Francine Darroch (she/her) and

Marika Warner (she/her), the Director of Research at MLSE Foundation, as Co-Researchers. The research was part of a larger project that explored the use of TVI approaches in SFD. Thus, participant consent forms named several co-researchers, including the Director of Research at MLSE LP, Marika Warner (see Appendix F-G). For this thesis, I focused specifically on the gendered dimensions of violence in an attempt to: 1) reframe the field of gender-based violence “in terms of recognizing the social construction of gender” (Hayhurst et al., 2021, p. 3); and 2) concentrate on equity rather than equality. To the second point, my goal was to prioritize “more intersectional approaches that stress the importance of relations among various categories of difference—including race, class, ethnic differences and religion—and aim to locate how these categories overlap on both structural and relational levels” (Hayhurst et al., 2021, p. 3) throughout my research. Through the E-Alliance grant, ethical approval was received by the Research Ethics Board at York University. In order to conduct semi-structured interviews and administer surveys, I obtained approval for research participant consent forms, interview guides, and demographic surveys also through the Research Ethics Board at York University. In this chapter, I begin with a brief history of Moss Park—the community MLSE LP recruits in, followed by a description of MLSE LP, the location where I conducted my research. I then provide an overview of my methodology, qualitative methods and forms of analysis used, and my reflexive position.

2.2.1 Moss Park

Moss Park is a small and diverse neighbourhood in the city of Toronto home to many low-income families and people experiencing homelessness. After the deindustrialization of the 1970s, Moss Park which was once home to large factories, became the poorest neighbourhood in the city of Toronto (Kumbi, 2013). Today, Moss Park’s community members struggle with increasingly serious health and safety issues (Kumbi, 2013). Moss Park has been framed as a neighbourhood

“in crisis” for generations and is home to a high concentration of shelters and social service agencies in the downtown east area (St. Louis-McBurnie et al., 2021). Historic portrayals of Moss Park as “an epicenter for individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse issues” (St. Louis-McBurnie et al., 2021; p. 1) has created a long-lasting stigmatizing effect that has followed the overall character of the neighbourhood and park locals for decades (St. Louis-McBurnie et al., 2021). My research attempts to deconstruct societal assumptions of the Moss Park neighbourhood by working collaboratively—through a FPAR approach—with community members attending MLSE LP to explore how TVISFD programs may potentially respond to, and address, challenges faced by the community. Herein, my aim was to support and amplify community voices and advance the needs of community members to achieve gender and health equitable outcomes. In the next section, I describe MLSE LP—the organization wherein field work was carried out.

2.2.2 MLSE LaunchPad

Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment LaunchPad (MLSE LP), located in Moss Park, is a 42,000 square-foot facility that includes three multi-sport courts,, a rock-climbing wall, multi-use community spaces, and a teaching kitchen (Klein, 2020). MLSE LP is the largest SFD facility in Toronto, where programs are open to youth between the ages of 6-29 who face barriers to positive development (Klein, 2020). MLSE LP aims to explore and measure how sport can help improve the lives of youth in the local area through a Sport for Development (SFD) approach (MLSE LaunchPad, 2017a). The organization has positioned SFD as a methodology, whereby “the intentional use of sport and physical activity can build healthy communities and help people reach their full potential” (MLSE LaunchPad, 2017a, para. 2).

MLSE LP is a branch of MLSE's charitable arm 'MLSE Foundation' (MLSE Foundation, 2022). The foundation has launched a 'Change the Game' campaign that is meant to raise awareness and funds to help eliminate barriers facing youth and support the dismantling of systemic racism (MLSE Foundation, 2022). The SFD research team at MLSE LP gathers data of registered MLSE LP members through a range of qualitative and quantitative methods so MLSE LP can help meet the needs of the community. MLSE LP youth demographics indicate that 88.67% identify as racialized youth, with the highest representation among Black youth at 33.8%. Of these youth polled, 76.76% reported an annual household income of less than \$30,000 (Warner et al., 2020). "The local area has a high proportion of subsidized housing and highest density of homeless shelters in Canada, exhibits high rates of poverty, and is home to many low-income families, including over 3000 low-income youth" (Warner et al., 2020, p. 12).

MLSE LP's staff consists of full-time staff responsible for managerial and oversight duties, and hourly staff made up of mostly youth that works as youth coaches and mentors. MLSE LP has upward of 75 hourly youth workers. MLSE LP offers employment SFD programs that are about 12 weeks long, including Leaders In Training (LIT) and Student Leadership In Coaching and Employment (SLICE). Several permanent hourly youth workers are community members that started at MLSE LP in employment SFD programs—known as “plus sport”—programs under a seven to 12 week contract, and later were hired as youth coaches and mentors. These programs employ youth between the ages of 15 and 18 and teaches them coaching and personal development skills focused on leadership. The organization makes an intentional effort to hire local community members as youth coaches and mentors. By collaborating with MLSE LP community members (including program participants and staff) I explored: 1) how MLSE LP's programs incorporated the use of TVI approaches to their SFD programming; and 2) how

MLSE LP may use TVISFD approaches to better support gender diverse people and women and girls during COVID-19 recovery. Through a Mitacs internship, I developed this research project with MLSE LP and worked as an intern at the organization for a four-month period. MLSE LP operated virtually from the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 to October 2021 then resumed in-person programming in November, which is when my internship began. I observed several of MLSE LP's "sport plus" and "plus sport" programs, including several of MLSE LP's partner programs. MLSE LP has several "partner programs" where they partner with other organizations such as SFD programs and a drop-in counselling service. Several of the partner programs were either mentioned to me by participants and staff or were delivered on-site during my time interning (see Table 1 below for full list of partner programs observed or discussed). In the following section, I describe the methodologies used that helped to guide this project.

Table 2. List of MLSE LaunchPad partner programs discussed by research participants or observed during field work.

Partner Program	Description
Square Circle	Square Circle is a non-profit organization using Social Circus arts to engage youth and strengthen communities by fostering confidence resilience, and courage in youth through Social circus (Sukhra, 2021).
Peacebuilders	Peacebuilders is a non-profit organization that seeks to improve access to justice for young people in conflict with the law and advocate for change in justice, child welfare, and education systems (Peacebuilders, 2018).
New Leaf Foundation	Drop-in yoga program provides youth (ages ten to 17) with increased self-awareness and self-regulation skills, along with improved physical, mental, and emotional well-being (MLSE LaunchPad, 2017b).
Lumenus/Skylark	Drop-in counselling. Youth (ages six to 29) and their families as well as staff members are offered 1 hour counselling services from expertly trained clinicians (MLSE LaunchPad, 2017b).

2.3 Methodology

For my research, I aimed to deconstruct dualistic understandings of gendered identities and challenge ways of thinking that assume a primary male/female sex and gender binary. I did this by adopting an intersectional feminist approach to gender equity, gender inclusivity and gender-based violence. I utilized five key tenets of feminist methodology: Gender and inequality, experience, action, critique of research, and participatory methods (Cancian, 1992, p. 626-627)—each of which challenge inequality—with specific consideration given to the intersecting identities of participants. I also employed a feminist participatory action research (FPAR) methodology. In this section, I briefly review these tenets and their distinctive features, then describe how I have engaged with an FPAR approach.

2.3.1 The Key Tenets of Feminist Science

The most distinctive feature of feminist methodologies is its focus on gender and inequality. Feminist scholarship assumes that widespread inequality of women by men and by patriarchal social patterns can be changed, and intersectional feminist theories also consider multiple inequalities based on race and other social identities that impact women. Further, since most of my participants are racialized, work by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) and Akilah Carter-Francique (2020) were essential in grounding my understandings of marginalized groups' identity intersections as it pertained to participant experiences.

Another element of feminist work is its emphasis on accurately portraying and describing peoples' experience to understand the broader context of peoples' actions and validate their feelings and activities. The emphasis was thus not to engage in a particular qualitative or quantitative technique, but instead give voice to peoples' experiences (Cancian, 1992). Thirdly, feminist research and methodologies are aimed at carrying out social change or taking 'action.'

Moreover, feminist studies aim to carry out some form of social change, such as the creation of policy recommendations aimed at social movement activists (Cancian 1992). A feminist methodology takes a critical approach to analyzing the research process and how it is shaped by gender, race, class, and sexual orientation of the researcher. Feminist research also emphasizes critiquing conventional or normative processes of categorization that legitimize relations of domination (Cancian, 1992). I critiqued normative processes of gender and sex categorization throughout my research by exploring the widespread assumption of a sex and gender binary and heteronormativity in SFD. The last element of feminist work is the use of participatory methods to reject a rigid separation between researchers and participants and give research subjects more power (Cancian, 1992). I thus utilized an FPAR approach in an attempt to reject the separation between myself and the participants involved in the study herein.

2.3.2 Feminist Participatory Action Research

Feminist participatory approaches aim to facilitate awareness of how structural power inequalities shape embodied experiences of marginalized groups; and, in turn, offer increased potential for transformational change (Tolhurst, et al., 2012). FPAR rejects the positivist tendency to grant exclusive power to the researcher(s) who are often credited for ‘discovering’ universal truths (Johnson & Flynn, 2021). Using this methodology contributed to a wider landscape of research that aims to directly serve social justice aims, empower marginalized groups, and affect social change (Johnson & Flynn, 2021). I used several interrelated dimensions of FPAR to inform this project, including: 1) centering gender and women’s diverse experiences while challenging forms of patriarchy; 2) foregrounding an intersectional feminist lens; 3) honoring voice and difference through participatory research processes (for example, in

collaboration with the Community Advisory Board (CAB; which I explain in more detail below); and 4) upholding reflexivity throughout the research process (Reid & Frisby, 2008).

Gender and women's experiences are central to FPAR "in giving explicit attention to how women and men, and those who do not identify with either of these gender binary categories, benefit from action-oriented research (or not)" (Reid & Frisby, 2008, p. 97). Specifically, and for example, I was interested in centring the experiences of girls, women, and gender diverse people, since these groups experience heightened rates of GBV (CWF, 2022). To describe the heightened risk of violence these groups face, I first used the term gender minorities to centre their experiences. However, after reviewing the literature further and obtaining feedback from the CAB at MLSE LP, the definition I used for 'gender minorities' seemed to homogenize gender identities that were quite heterogenous in nature. Therefore, and in collaboration with the CAB, I decided to explicitly name women, girls, and gender diverse people in place of the term "gender minorities".

To be clear, the CAB at MLSE LP involved in the oversight of this research project comprised of four youth workers and one full-time staff, all of whom identified as women. This research project was also proposed in collaboration with the Director of Research, Marika Warner. The CAB members that were consulted for this project were also on the Research Advisory Committee at MLSE LP—wherein members advise the research team on proposed research projects. In aligning with a FPAR approach, I attempted to create a *power-with* partnership instead of exerting *power-over* my research partners [the CAB] (Ponic et al., 2010). To do so, I: 1) joined the Research Advisory Committee at MLSE LP; 2) attended the first in-person MLSE LP team gathering since the COVID-19 lockdown; 3) consulted with the MLSE LP research team about this study; 4) co-created and published a podcast episode regarding the impact of COVID-19 on

SFD programs with Marika Warner (see Ferreira Gomes et al., 2021); and 5) collaborated with Marika on an E-Alliance research article based on this project (see E-Alliance, n.d.).

Developing a *power-with* partnership with the MLSE LP research team and CAB informed my research process in several ways. For instance, having the CAB and MLSE LP research team review my proposal allowed for self-reflection regarding the use of the word “minorities” and the potentially harmful implications this language has on groups being defined as a “minority”. Additionally, sharing and presenting interim findings to members of the CAB and research team and listening to members’ feedback enlightened the final results and recommendations of this study. Co-analysis of results and co-authorship were not feasible due to time constraints imposed by my academic institution. Indeed, studies by action scholars’ have pointed to the constraints graduate students (especially Master’s students with short timelines) face when trying to incorporate all tenets and dimensions of FPAR in their theses (Reid, 2000; Reid, 2004). A recent study by Johnson & Flynn (2021) illustrated some of the challenges researchers have in adhering to FPAR principles in real-life settings and the importance in maintaining a reflexive process in action research. Hence, it was critical that I was reflexive about the challenges faced in conducting action research, including the limitations in cohering to the tenets of FPAR.

Another dimension of FPAR is to account for intersectional analyses of women’s experiences (Reid & Frisby, 2008). I incorporated this dimension into my research by guiding my analyses through intersectionality and intersectional feminist lenses. For example, I explored the experiences of participants that were women of colour and accounted for the intersecting patterns of racism and sexism by asking my participants personal questions that may have seemed unrelated to my research, such as “can you tell me about yourself?” and “why did you first start attending MLSE LP’s programs?” When I asked these questions, participants began to describe how they

defined themselves and their identity, as well as their diverse experiences in the facility. Furthermore, I attempted to prioritize the knowledge and experiences of my participants, by relaying my interim findings with several participants and asking for their thoughts and feedback in informal conversations during my internship.

Another dimension I prioritized in/through my research was to produce knowledge through democratic interactive relationships (Reid & Frisby, 2008). For instance, once the CAB reviewed the proposed interview questions, I used the modified questions in my interviews (see Appendix A-B). After each of my interviews, I would ask the participant how they found the interview questions, what questions (if any) were they unclear about, and how the interview could have been improved. Based on this feedback, I would tweak the interview guide, and over the interview process, I would structure questions differently (see Appendix C-D).

Lastly, FPAR involves critical reflection that attempts to make explicit the power relations and exercise of power in the research process (Reid & Frisby, 2008). Herein, I negotiated sources of conflict and power imbalances between myself (the researcher) and participants (Reid & Frisby, 2008). For instance, in the research office, there were two swivel office chairs and four standard chairs. In attempting to diffuse the researcher-participant power relationship during my in-person interviews, I placed two of the standard chairs facing each other at a 6-foot distance with open space in between them. Then, when participants would enter the room, I would invite them to sit and fill in the consent form and demographic survey. Feminist participatory action researchers question deeply their power and positions in the research process (Reid & Frisby, 2008). A couple months into conducting interviews, I reflected on the power I had as a researcher. I started rethinking my attempt to equalize power relations between myself and the participant, and my placement of the chairs in the room as an attempt to equalize power between myself and the

participant. I decided to attempt to create more of an equitable environment for interviews by letting participants know they could sit in one of the swivel office chairs whereas I would sit in one of the standard chairs. Once I invited participants to choose between the standard chair or swivel chair, participants always chose to sit in the swivel chair, and interestingly enough—seemed more comfortable when being interviewed. Additionally, considering the reflexive dimension of FPAR it was critical that I kept reflexive field notes throughout my research (Reid & Frisby, 2008). I discuss my reflexive process more in Section 2.6 Reflexivity and Reflexive Field Notes.

To conclude, I used FPAR to combine the perspectives of (intersectional) feminism and participatory action research. PAR combines the goals of feminist concerns with its aim to change power relations in the research process and to stimulate transformative action (Schurr & Segebart, 2012). As described above, I actively engaged with FPAR to better understand participants' lived experiences of SFD and trauma and violence. Specifically, I used FPAR to explore how TVIPA was taken up in SFD programs at MLSE LP and how TVISFD may help to improve health outcomes and promote gender equity and GBV prevention in the surrounding Moss Park community. In the next section, I discuss how I went about recruiting research participants.

2.4 Methods

2.4.1 Recruitment

Research participants for this study were recruited through informal conversations with staff and participants at MLSE LP during field work. Research participants (n=15) included three full-time salaried staff, ten part-time hourly staff, and two program participants. Full-time staff are responsible for organization of MLSE LP's programs behind-the-scenes, whereas hourly staff are responsible for delivering and executing the SFD programs. It is important to note that, though my intention was to recruit women and girls *and* gender diverse people, I was only able to recruit

cisgender women and girls. Indeed, and before beginning my field work, I was warned by the Director of Research at MLSE LP, Marika Warner, that “it is possible—but not guaranteed—that some of the participants we recruit will identify as LGBTQIA2S+, and it is known that approximately 10 percent of the staff at MLSE LP identify as LGBTQIA2S+” (M. Warner, personal communication, 2021). Despite the low percentage of staff identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+, I still had high hopes that I would be able to recruit gender diverse participants. To my frustration, this became a difficult feat.

Though I did not interview any gender diverse people, I fostered a deep and meaningful friendship with a trans boy named Jesse that began attending MLSE LP regularly to play volleyball.

At around 7:00PM the volleyball program began, where I met Jayda and Jesse. Jayda usually comes to volleyball (Jesse said) and tonight Jesse wanted to join in because volleyball is his favourite sport (Reflexive Field Notes, November 9, 2021).

I unfortunately was not able to interview Jesse since I only had ethical approval to interview youth aged 16 and older, and Jesse was 14. Though, I should note that several studies have demonstrated adolescents as young as 14 are competent to make informed decisions (Flicker, 2008). In turn, I obtained Jesse’s verbal consent to reflect on his perspectives and our conversations in my findings using excerpts from my reflexive field notes.

Table 3. Interviewee Profiles

Pseudonym	Position	Pronouns	Interview Date	Location
Joanne	Hourly youth worker	She/her	December 7, 2021	MLSE LP
Amy	Full time staff	She/her	December 7, 2021	MLSE LP
Allie	Hourly youth worker	She/her	December 8, 2021	MLSE LP

Tiana	Participant	She/her	December 9, 2021	MLSE LP
Luiza	Participant/volunteer	She/her	December 14, 2021	MLSE LP
Olive	Hourly youth worker	She/her	December 12, 2021	Phone
Larissa	Hourly youth worker	She/her	December 17, 2021	Zoom
Jessica	volunteer	She/her	December 14, 2021	MLSE LP
Katherine	Hourly youth worker	She/her	February 9, 2022	Zoom
Michelle	Full time staff	She/her	December 9, 2021	MLSE LP
Nicole	Hourly youth worker	She/her	March 1 st , 2022	MLSE LP
Danielle	Hourly youth worker	She/her	March 1 st 2022	MLSE LP
Nori	Hourly youth worker	She/her	March 15, 2022	MLSE LP
Andy	Full time staff	She/her	March 15, 2022	MLSE LP
Emily	Hourly youth worker	She/her	March 24, 2022	Zoom

2.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews for my research since this approach involved enough structure to help me attend to my specific research question and provided space for participants to steer conversations in directions that could possibly offer new insights and meanings (Galletta, 2013). Interview guides were reviewed by the CAB, and questions that board members felt were too complex or could not be answered by the youth workers at MLSE LP were changed and/or removed. By using semi-structured interviews, I was able to foster meaningful dialogue with research participants about; their experiences using and/or delivering MLSE LP's SFD programming, what challenges they faced during the pandemic, how MLSE LP's programs may enhance health and gender equity, and how TVI approaches (safety, choice, connections, collaboration, training, etc.) are supportive for persons experiencing GBV. A few participants told

me after their interviews that the dialogue we engaged in felt more like a conversation to them rather than an interview. This affirmed that the interviews were the “site for the construction of knowledge” in which the research participants and I would produce knowledge together (Hand, 2003, p. 17).

I conducted 11 of my interviews at MLSE LP in the research office on the upper floor—the office I was permitted to use while interning at MLSE LP. I also gave interviewees the option to have the interview done remotely instead of on-site at MLSE LP. Four participants preferred being interviewed over Zoom (the video conferencing platform), and one participant preferred to be interviewed over the phone. For in-person interviews, I followed guidelines set out in the “York Health and Safety Plan for Human Participant Research” guide, including physical distancing from participants, use of masks or face coverings, COVID-19 screening, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and cleaning and disinfecting (York University, 2022).

In order to stay mindful of the research-participant power relations at play, I began my interviews by letting participants know that if there were any questions they did not feel comfortable answering, they could let me know and I would skip over them, and if they wanted to stop the interview at any point, they could also let me know and I would stop the interview and the recording. At the halfway point, I said to participants that the new few questions would be specific to better understanding how MLSE LP’s programming may be trauma- and violence-informed. I then reminded participants that they would not need to respond to these questions if they did not want to (see Appendix C-D for full statements). During interviews, I would sometimes give participants guidance and talk support as they described their experiences with violence (e.g., I could not idly stand by and not intervene when participants spoke about their experiences of covert GBV in the space). Participants responded to all questions, except for a few participants who

expressed their uncertainty about answering some questions. For instance, when asking one of my participants, a coach assistant (hourly staff), about whether MLSE LP's programming facilitated any discussion on trauma, Katherine seemed rather uncertain about her response. "I don't... think we've had any discussion on trauma, or at least like, I haven't seen that, like, especially on Mondays. I don't... I don't think that's happened. Yeah. No" (Katherine). In another interview, when I asked another participant, a full-time staff on the sports programming team, whether MLSE LP's programming was supportive of gender non-binary participants, I was met with similar uncertainty.

"Yeah, you know, okay, so specifically at LaunchPad, not sure if I'm the best person to ask for this, because I don't have enough details on it. Again, like the same thing I, we just want to make it a safe and inclusive space[...]" (Amy)

Despite some uncertainty, all my research participants attempted to answer every one of my interview questions to the best of their ability. Interview excerpts are undated for confidentiality purposes since many interviews took place at MLSE LP during operating hours.

2.4.3 Transcription

I worked on transcribing my interviews during the process of conducting interviews to maintain an iterative process with the data. After the interviews were transcribed, I emailed each interviewee their transcript.

2.4.4 Demographic Surveys

A standard demographic survey was created and administered using MLSE LP's user-friendly questionnaire that the MLSE research team uses to collect participant demographics. MLSE LP's demographic survey tracks age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, and geographical location of residence. To align with an FPAR approach and integrate another intersectional dimension to the research (Fine & Torre, 2019; Reid & Frisby, 2008), I added the

question “how would you define your sexuality?” as an attempt to obtain data on different sexual identities and their experiences. However, only one of my interviewees identified as bisexual, whereas all other participants identified as heterosexual/straight. The survey also captured the racial-ethnic, class, gender, and geographical identities of participants. The survey was administered to participants at the beginning of in-person interviews or emailed to participants prior to their online interviews. Every survey question had a ‘prefer not to answer’ option.

2.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative data and analyses [such as thematic analysis] are important to enable ongoing investigation of categories through deep understandings of lived experiences (Tolhurst et al., 2012). Thematic analysis guided the interpretation of interviews and observations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information into themes; a pattern that describes and organizes possible observations and interprets aspects of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). A theme is a pattern found in the information that describes and organizes observations (Boyatzis, 1998). Themes and sub-themes were generated deductively from interviews, and I developed a compilation of several sub-themes, often called a codebook (Boyatzis, 1998), using NVivo. In line with the FPAR approach guiding this study, I prioritized the perspectives of participants, informally through active discussions during my fieldwork (e.g., I would take walks with youth mentors around the court, converse with youth members who were sitting on the bleachers, and chat with youth coaches and volunteers when I would assist on-court) and over text messages with participants and mentors. FPAR researchers derive wisdom from Other’s experiences by engaging in empathetic centerless dialogue with an Other in which the power dynamics are fluid (Reid & Frisby, 2008). By conversing with youth workers and youth members on court (in which the power dynamics were fluid), I was able to derive knowledge and

understanding of their lived experiences. These conversations and communications were often focused on: a) how TVISFD programming may address the challenges of gender diverse people, women, and girls; b) how might MLSE LPs programs help achieve health and gender equity in communities that may be experiencing GBV; and c) the feasibility of TVI approaches in supporting women, girls, and gender diverse people.

By interviewing MLSE LP's staff and participants, I explored how participants felt their needs were being met by MLSE LP, and how they want to see change in community resources and approaches to programming. Interviewing research participants and engaging in SFD programming on the court – within the walls of MLSE LP – helped me better understand how TVI approaches were being implemented in MLSE LP's SFD programming and how participants felt these programs facilitated the community in moving toward gender and health equity. Additionally, data analysis occurred as an iterative process throughout my research. I did this by maintaining a 'back and forth' with my research data, wherein I constantly referred to the data to make sense of new information and knowledge (Kirby, et al., 2006). As a researcher, I acknowledged that my behaviour will always affect participants' responses, thereby influencing findings (Finlay, 2002). Though because I had been interning in the space, participants knew me personally and I was able to articulate my intention to honour their voices through FPAR. However, since many of my interviewees were employed by MLSE LP, participant responses may have reflected more favourably about the facility's SFD programming and its ability to respond to diverse youth member needs. Moreover, it was important that I considered my social positioning, including personal characteristics, such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, personal experiences, biases, beliefs, preferences, and emotional responses to participants (Berger,

2015). For that reason, I took extensive reflective field notes during fieldwork. In the next section, I elaborate on my reflexive process.

2.6 Reflexivity and Reflexive Field Notes

Reflexivity plays a critical role in the research and evaluation process of SFD (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2013). Reflexivity is a process of critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality and explicit recognition that this positionality may affect the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015). To maintain a continual reflexive process throughout my research process, I made reflexive field notes during my fieldwork and before and after my interviews. In FPAR, reflexive field notes should be included as a source of data to "help illuminate and resolve tensions that result from power differences observed in partnerships" (Reid & Frisby, 2008, p. 332). They are especially helpful for igniting a practice of critical reflexivity, which – when taken up in the context of intersectionality – may "often lead to changes or adaptations in the research process as it unfolds, as researchers and community members strive to make evident both power and privilege," (Morrow et al., 2022). Through this process, FPAR researchers are well positioned to remain reflexive about their social positioning and develop reflexive knowledge (Reid & Frisby, 2008). A reflexive approach was also supported by Kay (2009), who called for more reflexive forms of research in SFD to prioritize local understandings and knowledge—especially because such understandings are crucial to the assessment of the 'social impact' of sport in development (p. 1190). Despite my goals to try and contribute to a wider landscape of research in SFD that prioritizes the voices of marginalized groups, the reality was that I conducted this research as a white woman working with a community that was mostly non-white. As Darnell (2012) states, "my own position as a White researcher likely afford me access, authority, and trust of participants to discuss their experiences, but also the responsibility to deconstruct and challenge relations of

racial dominance” (p. 193). In maintaining an FPAR approach, it was pertinent to account for power relations in the facility. When I was interning at MLSE LP, I noticed many of the participants and youth workers were racialized, whereas many of the full-time staff were white. Employing non-white identities in part-time positions that inherently have less job security than full-time positions reflected the precarity of work that faced racialized community members in the surrounding area. Working as another privileged white body in the facility and having little control over the racialized power dynamic at play lead me to some feelings of discomfort. Albeit people of white and non-white identities were overall welcoming and open to involving me in the programs. My first day of interning was on a Monday which is MLSE LP’s women and girl-only day of SFD programming. Unfortunately, this was the only day of my internship I hadn’t felt included by a youth coach. I described this interaction in my field notes.

I was introduced to the lead female coach running the program by Bryan, a member of MLSE LP’s research team. She was instructed to briefly introduce me to the other youth workers once everyone arrived for programming, however, she never did. She did not seem enthused to involve me in programming and was rather stand offish. However, I introduced myself to the other youth workers after the lead coach gave them program instructions (Reflexive Field Notes, November 1st, 2021).

Still struggling with feeling excluded by the lead coach, I tried to instead foster relationships with coach assistants, which is when I met Nicole. Nicole and I bonded over our mutual interest in research. In further understanding my feelings of exclusion and positionality in the space, I noted in my reflexive field notes how my experience in sport has not always been an easy one.

Growing up with Brazilian and Italian parents, soccer was the only sports game I ever saw playing on our TV. I loved playing soccer, but often struggled with feelings of exclusion [...] I’ve had my fair share of experiences being the odd one out in sport (Reflexive Field Notes, November 9, 2021).

Moreover, my own desire for social inclusion in SFD is rooted in my interpersonal experiences of trauma and exclusion. In addition, I sometimes felt excluded in the space for my athletic ability, which I reflexively noted.

I had some of the coaches ask me if I wanted to shoot some hoops with them. Though I really like basketball, I'm not good at it. I've noticed that the coaches are really good at their respective sports and so I've been too intimidated to play. I do however enjoy walking around the court with youth mentors and can see how doing this can be therapeutic for the youth (Reflexive Field Notes, November 23, 2021).

It is critical that as the researcher I maintain a critical self-evaluation of my positionality and its explicit effects on the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015). Thus it is important to note that the thoughts and feelings of being 'Othered' that I recorded in my reflexive field notes may stem from my own experiences of exclusion in sport and are not generalizable to youth experiences in the space. It is also pertinent that I acknowledge my sexual orientation, since this is something I expected my participants to disclose. I have previously defined my sexuality as bisexual, but also want to recognize that by signifying I am attracted to both men and women, I am perpetuating the myth that gender and sex operate in a binary system. I am now familiarizing myself with the term pansexual in defining my sexuality as to not limit attraction to sex and gender identity or expression. I believe my own diverse identity as a self-identifying queer woman enabled me to establish a deep friendship with the only 'out' queer person in the space at the time, I'll call him Jesse.

I could tell Jesse was trans because it appeared he was wearing a chest binder under his baggy black T-shirt. I also noticed Jesse had a lot of scars down both of his arms. Jesse was really talkative after I complimented his hair [...] He told me people at school usually made fun of his hair. He also told me kids think he's weird because he tells people he's gay. [...] Jesse asked me to play one-on-one volleyball with him. [...] I told him I wouldn't be as good as the two male coaches, but he said he didn't care. He seemed to just feel more comfortable with me. [...] I can understand how Jesse feels [...] It doesn't seem like there are any queer or 'out' coaches (Reflexive Field Notes, November 9, 2021).

Given verbal consent from Jesse to maintain reflexive field notes of our interactions, I was able to take several reflexive field notes of our conversations that profoundly impacted me, and thus impacted this research. Despite a notable absence of gender and sexual diversity in the space, conversations with cisgender participants exhibited gender curiosity. For instance, when I volunteered on Monday, I attended MLSE LP's GIRL (Girls In Real Life) program, an educational program that took place in one of the facility's classrooms. Before the program began, a participant asked the coach leading the program a question aloud about the gender inclusion of the program:

One of the participants said her friend wanted to come to the programming but her friend transitioned to a boy and the youth member asked if her friend can still come to the girls programming. The woman coach running the program said, well, your friend can participate in whatever program they feel comfortable with. The youth then told us that her friend was imaginary (Reflexive Field Notes, November 1, 2021).

Through these reflexive field notes, I was able to understand how gender shaped the construction of identities, behaviour, and social relations in MLSE LP (Reid & Frisby, 2008).

Due to scheduling difficulties, I started interning on Tuesdays the subsequent week, where I was able to observe MLSE LP's mixed-sex SFD programming. During my time interning at the facility, I observed sport-plus programs including volleyball, ball hockey, New Leaf Yoga, Square Circle, and one plus-sport program, Student Leadership In Coaching and Employment (SLICE). During my time interning, I read about how MLSE LPs 'alternative' programming, including square circle and yoga, generally focus on less athletically inclined individuals (Klein, 2020). The square circle program that teaches youth circus skills was noted to have "far more gender non-conformity" (Klein, 2020, p. 56) than MLSE LPs other programs. I was thus eager to volunteer in these specific programs in hopes of fostering connection with gender diverse participants, however, both sessions I sat in on had a low turnout. In Square Circle, a few children under the

age of ten attended the program, whereas I was the only participant that attended the Yoga program.

Today I sat in on ‘New Leaf Yoga’. Rochelle was the coach from New Leaf and Joanne was the mentor supervising from MLSE LP. Unfortunately, no one showed up for yoga except for me. Joanne expressed they had bigger turn outs before covid and since opening up after covid, they’ve only really had a couple of kids join yoga (Reflexive Field Notes, December 7, 2021).

I realized programs like Square Circle and New Leaf yoga were outsourced and were thus taught by different coaches rather than MLSE LP’s hourly staff. Reflexivity is about reflecting on power, a researcher’s power to perceive, interpret, and communicate about their research participants (Reid & Frisby, 2008). Aligning with intersectionality and intersectional feminist lenses as well as FPAR, I reflected on the intersectional identities of youth members and workers (e.g., Jesse’s intersecting social identities as transgender, gay, white, and a local community member) and how this impacted their experiences (e.g., participating in a heteronormative space). In turn, reflexive field notes evoked feelings of empathy and understanding as a researcher, which helped me to interpret and communicate about my research participants and the research landscape wherein my project took place. In the next section, I describe how I navigated my position as an insider interning at MLSE LP and an outsider in the Moss Park community.

2.7 Doing Community-based Research as an Insider/Outsider

Community-based participatory research has evolved as an effective health research paradigm that attempts to make research more inclusive by; fostering partnerships between communities and academics, and emphasizing the participation, influence, and control, of non-academic research in the process of knowledge production (Flicker et al., 2007). To ensure my research was aligned with a community-based FPAR approach, I wanted to immerse myself in the

programming, and I did so by working as a “volunteer” in the space. With the support of a funded Mitacs fellowship, I worked as an intern at MLSE LP. As an intern, I conducted research with MLSE LP and acted as a “volunteer” at MLSE LP for a 4-month period. Several high school students assisted in MLSE LP SFD programs as volunteers, several of which were completing their community service hours to graduate. Despite my role working as a “volunteer” and wearing an MLSE LP T-shirt that read “volunteer”, I was paid for my work conducting research and acting as a “volunteer” at the facility. In addition to conducting research for this project, I assisted the MLSE LP research team in writing a literature review on how the establishment of a local WNBA team might impact social and economic outcomes in the GTA.

On my first day of the internship, one of the MLSE LP research team members gave me an overview of the entire facility from the court on the ground floor, where the programs took place, to the upper level, where only the full-time staff were permitted. The upper level had large glass window panels that you could observe the court from. Youth workers (including coaches, mentors, and volunteers) were not typically permitted on the upper level, but because I was doing research with the community, I was told that I could make notes there and go for break there, which was exactly what I did for the first two months of my fellowship. Working as both a researcher and volunteer complicated my positionality as an insider/outsider. When I was on the upper level, I became somewhat of an ‘insider’ with the full-time staff, but still had an outsider perspective of the youth members in the space, observing them engage in SFD from the large glass window panels. Whereas when I acted as a volunteer, I became an ‘insider’ with the program participants and hourly youth workers, building trust, reporting on the experiences of youth, and increasing the integrity of my findings (Finlay, 2002). Additionally, I collaborated with the CAB at MLSE LP on this research project, and before starting at the facility, the research proposal was reviewed and

approved by the board. Though I was working on this research project with MLSE LP, I was an outsider of the Moss Park community—where several of the youth workers and youth members lived. Maintaining reflexive field notes during my visits was an important part of how I tried to navigate my experience as an insider/outsider doing community-based research. For example, in my reflexive field notes I noted my experience in the field as an insider/outsider as well as the many privileges I was afforded as a white, middle-class, cisgender woman from the suburbs. “Having grown up in the suburbs of Ontario, I hadn’t interacted with many people of colour growing up, but since starting my internship at MLSE LP, I’ve become close with more people of colour than ever before” (Reflexive Field Notes, December 7, 2021). In fostering relationships with racialized youth, it was made apparent that I had many privileges that youth in the Moss Park community were not afforded, including class privilege.

Today. I wore my Calvin Klein winter coat to MLSE LP. When I entered the building, one of the youth mentors I had gotten close with, Joanne, commented “wow look at you in your fancy *Calvin Klein* coat, okay girl!” (Reflexive Field Notes, December 14, 2021)

I realized that even though I had my winter coat for many years prior (my mom bought it for me on sale at The Bay in 2015), the Calvin Klein logo signified a class luxury that youth workers and members living in Moss Park were not afforded. In turn, reflexive field notes shed light of how researcher’s biases, experiences in the field, and role in the production of knowledge inherently underlies empirical research. Hence, this research provides an example to university partners in the field of community-based research as to how to engage in reflexive practice. Overall, reflexive field notes enlightened and bolstered my research findings, which I identify in my Results.

Chapter 3: Results

In this section I outline key findings generated from my fieldwork, interviews, and survey results as they pertain to my research questions. Since all of the research questions explored the

utility of TVI approaches in SFD, the findings that evolved were highly interconnected. Based on my survey findings, I begin this chapter by reporting on the demographic results of my participants. With this in mind, I then turn to the key themes generated throughout my data analysis. First, I describe how TVI approaches in SFD addressed the challenges of gender diverse people and women and girls living in disadvantaged communities (RQ1). This is followed by a description of ways in which LP's programs may contribute to the advancement of health and gender equity for their local community (RQ2). I then describe how SFD organizations might implement TVI approaches and assess whether TVISFD is appropriate and feasible in supporting gender diverse people, women, and girls (RQ3).

3.1 Survey Findings

The findings from the demographic survey administered to research participants (n=15) indicated that fourteen participants defined their sexuality as heterosexual/straight and one participant defined their sexuality as bisexual. All fifteen participants identified their gender as girl/woman. Regarding race and ethnicity, seven participants identified as Black, two participants identified as Middle Eastern, one participant identified as Southeast Asian, one participant identified as South Asian, and four participants identified as White. Seven participants were between the ages of 16 and 20, five participants were 21 to 26 years old, and three participants were between ages of 30 and 40. Regarding geographic location, one participant was from North York, one participant was from York, one participant was from Scarborough, one participant was from Oakville, six participants were from the downtown east end, and five participants preferred not to include their geographic location. In terms of household income, one participant indicated their income was between \$30K and \$50K, three participants indicated their income was between \$50K and \$70K, one participant indicated their income was between \$70K and \$95K,

two participants indicated their income was over 95K, and two participants indicated their income was over 150K, six participants preferred not to include their household income.

3.2 RQ (1)

How might TVI approaches to Sport For Development (SFD) programming address the challenges of gender diverse people and women and girls living in marginalized communities?

This research question contributed to the SFD movement and TVIPA literature by investigating how a TVI approach can be applied to SFD, and how incorporating TVIPA in SFD can support youth at a heightened risk of GBV, including women, girls, and gender diverse people. Many of my interviewees were women of colour (n=11) acting in MLSE LP as SFD youth workers (n=9) and SFD participants (n=2). Racism and sexism intersect to further marginalize women of colour beyond what women and men of colour endure (Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016). Thus, the synergistic effects of multiple forms of oppression intersect to create an “Othered” experience for women of colour in sport (Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016). In turn, it was important to understand how participants’ racialized and gendered experiences intersected and impacted their experiences at MLSE LP when exploring how TVIPA in SFD might address some of the challenges these women faced.

3.2.1 Fostering Cultural Safety through Community Representation in SFD

A TVI approach to program delivery upholds cultural safety—practices where people are supported to draw strengths from their identity, culture, and community (Bobadilla, et al., 2021). Ten participants expressed the importance of having people that looked like them as mentors and coaches and having community representation. One participant spoke about her experience in one of MLSE LP’s partner programs “Peacebuilders”. Tiana expressed that as a youth member, she felt the youth workers understood her experience as a minority: “We're all minorities, and we've had our different experiences, and things like that. So, they [youth workers] knew, and

they understood that we'd have some experiences that you know, were a bit traumatic, or [...] really difficult experiences.” Since many of the youth coming into MLSE LP have racialized identities, it was important for the youth workers and members that the staff reflected this diversity as well. Most of the hourly youth workers were people of colour, and some of the full-time positions were also occupied by people of colour. A volunteer shared: “For people who are... people of color, when you walk into certain places, it's not always comfortable. And I noticed, Launchpad is very diverse. [...] So, to me, I don't feel uncomfortable” (Jessica). Hiring community members as youth mentors and coaches with racialized identities seemed to help support the needs of youth members experiencing trauma. Indeed, and as a youth mentor further explained: “I feel like the space itself is healing. Because you're able to see people that have come from the other side of trauma and are healing, [...] and that look like you as well” (Larissa). TVIPA seeks to build awareness of the effects of trauma with an understanding of marginalizing circumstances including (but not limited to) racial discrimination (Darroch et al., 2018). Several SFD youth workers, including youth mentors, coaches, coach assistants, and volunteers—were also Moss Park community members and/or people of colour. Thus, many youth workers at MLSE LP were inherently knowledgeable of community-related and race-based trauma. When speaking to one of the managers, she explained the intentional effort the organization makes in hiring youth mentors and coaches from the local community:

One of the things that is really wonderful is the approach to hiring and staffing, which has, you know, been very intentional in making sure, like, the staff who were here can reflect the realities of the kids were coming in, who were like, are from the neighborhood and look like the kids coming into the space. And, you know, and now, what is actually incredible, as many of the youth who used to come in as members are also growing into staff roles. So, I think like, having a really strong understanding of the lived experience that youth are coming into the space with helps create a safe space, because staff know that, you know, there might be lots of things going on in members lives, that, you know, they're coming with outside the space, and this being a space where, you know, they can come have fun. (Andy)

I interviewed two managers, both of which were white women. There were some managers that were people of colour, but because they were men I did not interview them. The lack of women [sport managers] of colour in comparison to their white counterparts and men of colour demonstrates how different social factors, like racism and sexism, intersect to marginalize women of colour (Crenshaw, 1989; Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016). One of the managers—that I will refer to as Michelle—was responsible for supporting the youth workers in their respective roles. Michelle echoed similarly the importance of community representation: “We serve predominantly Black youth [...] and we want to hire from the communities that we're serving, so we know that with role models it's important that the youth see themselves reflected in the people that are coaching them.” Interviews with MLSE LP staff highlighted their understandings of the local community's experiences of trauma and violence and how these factors impacted their lives: a critical component of TVIC. Though most of the youth workers were people of colour, some of them were white. I had several informal conversations with two white coaches and one formal interview with a white woman coach I will refer to as Olive. White youth workers were seemingly understanding of community barriers associated with racism. For instance, when speaking with Olive about racism, she described a situation wherein a youth member was experiencing racism at their school, explaining that school wasn't always a safe space for these youth:

A youth came in and was just talking about how he was being kind of bullied at school for his skin colour, so that's definitely a challenging problem to [...] unpack, especially as a white female. [...] So, we pass it on to our supervisor and it also gets just passed around through majority of the staff working so they know to [...] reiterate to all the youth the importance of not bullying [...] and ensure that Launchpad is kept a safe place. If schools are not kept safe, they have a place to come [...] without feeling like they're being targeted. (Olive)

Olive, along with the other four white women I interviewed, seemed mindful of their positionality as white bodies in a predominantly racialized space, and their ability (or inability) to respond to the racialized experiences of youth. Raising awareness of multiple forms of violence is an important component of TVIC and promoting health seeking behaviour (Cullen et al., 2021), and thus staff member's understandings of race-based violence was an important aspect of MLSE LP's TVI approach. Despite some indication that race-based violence was being addressed by staff in the space, GBV was not as clearly addressed—a topic I return to in Section 3.3.2.

Though I did not interview any gender diverse youth, five participants spoke to the importance of having 2SLGBTQ+ representation in fostering a supportive space.

You need to make sure that women of different colours, sizes, faiths, are represented. I think you need to make sure you have transgender staff, you need to have LGBTQ, you need to make sure that your space is representative of what you want to support. And also, that your management team is also supportive and representative of what you want to support. I feel like things can only go so far when it's just a group of people talking about helping another group of people. There needs to be some actual personal investment at all levels of an organization for you to make things run smoothly. (Joanne)

Echoing Joanne's sentiments, representation was an important aspect of creating a safe space for youth. However, the research herein underlined that there was a lack of gender diversity and queer representation at MLSE LP. The extent of cis-heteronormativity was represented in my research sample, wherein 100% of my participants were cisgender women and 93% (14 out of 15) identified as 'heterosexual/straight'. Incorporating people with a diversity of gender expressions in sport signals that [2SLGBTQ+] people are welcomed and respected in these spaces (Braumüller et al., 2020). In turn, including gender diverse staff members may support the inclusion of gender diverse youth in TVIPA and SFD programs widely. Additionally, providing staff training on TVIPA practices that raise awareness about the different forms of violence—

particularly the ways people experience gender discrimination—may strengthen SFD program delivery.

3.2.2 Using TVIPA to Cultivate Safe Spaces in SFD

TVIPA enhances safety and trust for its users and providers by creating emotionally and physically safe environments to be physically active (Darroch et al., 2018). My findings were generally consistent with this, since many of MLSE LP's youth mentors and coaches—embedded in the community themselves—understood experiences of community violence and trauma and were able to cultivate a safe space for youth entering the space. MLSE LP's SFD programs were designed using a sport-for-development approach, thus programs were not built on TVIPA or TVIC principles. Herein, interviewees were not familiar with TVIPA, hence my decision to seek out how the facility might use a TVI approach in their SFD programs (e.g., how programs created emotionally and physically safe spaces). Thus, I explored the ways in which TVIC principles were being utilized in their SFD program delivery through interviews and field work.

Results illustrated that MLSE LP was able to provide a safe spatial environment for its youth members and workers to be physically active. For example, when asked to describe how the organization provided safety for youth, one of the managers responsible for sport programming described how MLSE LP fostered a safe space by design:

I think that part of it is the actual physical space. We really try and make sure we have the front desk present, and we have youth mentors whose role is just like to know the kids and pre-COVID their families and all that kind of stuff. And then we also had a pass procedure, so just from a physical safety standpoint, [...] all adults who weren't in programming would have a pass with a specific colour on it. So, if we saw somebody outside of the zone you would approach them or if you saw someone without a pass just so that we can keep track of who was actually supposed to be here as one way to make sure the kids were safe (Michelle).

TVI approaches to [SFD program] delivery can foster safety and trustworthiness by design, minimizing the potential for re-traumatization and maximizing the potential for skill-building (Bobadilla et al., 2021). MLSE LP's programs aligned with a TVIPA approach by having created a safe [SFD] space for youth members to be physically active (Darroch et al., 2018). As described by Michelle, MLSE LP fostered a physically safe environment for youth through their designed safety procedures. As previously discussed, MLSE LP is at the epicenter of Toronto's downtown east end in Moss Park. The surrounding area was overcrowded and cramped with little space on the streets and sidewalks; however, when you walked into MLSE LP, suddenly the density of the city disappeared, and you were placed in a spacious, modern looking building. I noted this juxtaposition on my walk from Dundas station to MLSE LP:

I was walking from Dundas Station to Jarvis and Dundas, where MLSE LP is located, when I noticed that the further, I walked from Dundas Square and the closer I got to Jarvis, the more I saw people that appeared to be unhoused. The sidewalks were busy with people passing, but once I entered into MLSE LP, it was so spacious and rather empty of people (Reflexive Field Notes, November 9, 2021).

I arrived at 3:30PM on November 9th, so programming at MLSE LP hadn't begun yet, hence my note about the space being noticeably vacant. "I feel a sense of relief moving from the cramped streets of Moss Park to the spacious environment at MLSE LP, and I can understand why community members might feel a similar sense of relief entering MLSE LP" (Reflexive Field Notes, November 9, 2021). The feeling of safety I noted in my reflexive field notes aligned with several youth worker's knowledge and understanding of the space. During an interview, Larissa, a youth mentor, said "I feel like in all the craziness going around the area, it's like this one security or safety net that's in the area". Toronto's lack of permanent housing options has made Moss Park—nestled between several gentrified neighbourhoods—home to many unhoused people (see Draaisma, 2021). The surrounding community also experienced high rates of

violence, with one coach assistant having described: “We have seen [...] incidents that have affected this community, [...] gun violence that has affected the community, and we have been responsive in making sure that staff feel checked in with” (Emily). Emily—a community member and youth worker—noted feeling supported by staff when violent incidents occurred in the surrounding neighbourhood. Thus, having a space where there were no perceived threats of danger supported community members experiencing trauma- and violence-related distress. The sense of safety and trust fostered by MLSE LP’s staff and space was described by one of the managers as the ‘magic’ of the organization:

I think there's something to the magic of this space, where I think youth who might be actively experiencing trauma or have experienced trauma in their life, this can be a space where you in some ways leave things at the door when you come in, you know? [...] So, I think in that sense, this creates that kind of reprieve from that in a way (Andy).

MLSE LP created a space that protected community members from physical risks—such as violence—that they may have been exposed to outside of the space. Indeed, the building provided a safe and spacious environment for community members to participate in SFD programs. Having said this, since I interviewed people with a wide range of perspectives, organizational positionalities, and backgrounds, participants’ perceptions of safety and support differed. For instance, several interviewees felt MLSE LP programs adequately supported all genders. One of my interviewees described:

I feel like they're very welcoming. We have like, a lot of girls in our programs. If someone does identify as like queer, gay or trans, I think they would also enjoy it. We never really make it gender based. (Luiza, participant and volunteer).

In contrast, other interviewees felt programming was supportive of their experiences as women but may not have been supportive for gender diverse people:

Let's be honest, transgender youth or youth who are struggling with their sexual identities or anything like that, they're not going to be so inclined to just jump into a coed sport. I've seen it firsthand. They just don't feel comfortable. (Allie, youth mentor)

Luiza and Allie’s knowledge about how MLSE LP’s programs were gender inclusive differed substantially. Luiza felt gender wasn’t as pertinent to address in programming, stating “we never really make it gender based”, whereas Allie did not feel programs were necessarily supportive for all gender and sexual identities. In considering FPAR, intersectionality, and how experiences are tied to gendered, classed, and racialized power relations (Reid & Frisby, 2008), I note that survey results illustrated both interviewees (Allie and Luiza) were Black, heterosexual, middle-class cisgender women and hourly youth workers. Other social identity categories such as age—wherein Allie was older than Luiza—or dimensions of identity that weren’t covered in the survey, including Allie and Luiza’s different lived experiences, may explain why their opinions differed. Further, what was deemed safe and supportive for the women I interviewed in this study may not be perceived as safe and supportive for gender diverse youth. As previously iterated in section 2.6, cultural safety is perceived subjectively wherein the individual determines whether a service is safe (Cullen et al., 2021). Considering the subjectivity of cultural safety, TVIPA may not be able to foster emotionally and physically safe environments for all but may contribute to the creation of a *safer* space for all. Moreover, the ways in which TVI approaches addressed the challenges for some may have very well been exclusionary for others.

3.2.3 Providing TVIC through Informal Support: Building Trust and Connection

Interview conversations pointed to the key roles that MLSE LP youth mentors and coaches played in building trust and rapport with the youth that come into the space. All three full-time staff members I interviewed had acknowledged that the hourly youth workers, as the ones delivering the programs, spent the most time with youth in the space. Youth mentors provided emotional support to youth by building trust and fostering relationships with youth members. One youth mentor described, “Some days I’m a parent, some days I’m a friend, some

days I'm a mini-therapist, all of the above" (Joanne). Another youth mentor shared "We kind of have to be a jack of all trades, so that's why people say that I never sit down" (Allie). Building a sense of trust with staff and establishing trusting relationships is a crucial aspect of a TVIC approach (Wathen & Varcoe, 2019). In addition, providing informal support through conversation helps to support survivors of GBV (Scheer, 2021). Thus, hiring youth mentors to support and foster relationship with youth in MLSE LP was important in establishing TVIPA in their SFD programs. The MLSE LP youth coaches also fostered trusting relationships with youth members. One coach explained that when youth shared their lives and personal perspectives with them, the staff were better positioned to help youth: "I feel like a lot of the traumas our youth go through, they don't tell you right away [...] it's not like a 'hey, I have this problem! Help me fix it.' We're kind of slowly noticing it through conversation" (Emily). Emily shared that providing talk support through casual conversations with youth helped to address the challenges youth members faced:

I do just think that a lot of things that are part of healing kind of happen informally, and not in a setting where you're necessarily talking to a professional, [...] A lot of times it's kind of easier to hash out situations through physical activity and allowing your stress levels to go down [...] and having informal conversations with your coaches. (Emily)

Other youth workers described that many youth members would open up to them about their personal experiences and challenges. For instance, two of the youth workers I interviewed, Emily and Nori, described instances wherein youth members 'came out' to them. Nori described:

I dealt with sexuality in a way where a child that I got really close with, one of the participants that I'm really close with, like, we almost worked together all the time when they're in the building. They found one of the other participants attractive, and they're between the ages of 11 to 14 (Nori).

Several youth workers noted that they were sometimes uncertain how to navigate conversations around gender and sexuality with youth, explaining they wanted to support them to the best of

their ability, but weren't always sure how. One youth worker shared "one of the members that I registered, I think a year ago, changed their sexuality to non-binary [...] I don't know if I should have let coaching staff know, or if there was anything like that [...]" (Danielle). Though Danielle said that a youth member changed their *sexuality* to non-binary, the term non-binary is used to describe a person's *gender identity*. Additionally, non-binary people have a variety of sexual orientations, just as cisgender people do. To foster trust and connection with gender diverse youth members, it is critical that gender and sexual identity, as well as gender discrimination and homophobia, are understood as separate entities by youth workers and members. Understanding the diversity of gender and sexuality is particularly important considering young people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming youth are underrepresented and often rendered invisible in literature (see Fine & Torre, 2019). Another youth worker noted that youth members were disclosing their sexual and gender identities with coaches:

We do have a lot of youth [...] who are coming out to coaches. I've had [...] a participant come out to me, or I've had other participants change their pronouns and be open about that within the program, and these youth are like 9-10 [years old]. So, you know, as coaches [...] how do we support them? [...] What kind of conversations are we having within the staff to make sure that any ignorance or negative biases aren't being put onto the court or are not in LP *period*. (Emily)

In this excerpt, Emily described that she felt coaches should be given guidance regarding how to navigate conversations about sexuality to best support youth, including how to mitigate negative biases. Sexuality and sexual health are often difficult conversations for parents to have with their children and there remains ongoing confusion about the role of formal and informal sex education (Flicker & Guta, 2008). Some youth workers were seemingly mindful about where their gaps in knowledge needed filling, specifically regarding diverse gender and sexual identities. When speaking with one of the managers about the training that youth workers are given at MLSE LP, she expressed:

We do everything from teaching roles in sport, to accessible sport, to inclusivity training, to anti-oppression training [...] We've done work with The 519 [an organization in Toronto that advocates for the inclusion of LGBTQ communities] on LGBTQ2S+ training, so mental health, first aid, raising anti-racist kids is one we just offered [...] Honestly, this is the discussion we're having currently is like, how do we prioritize all of the things and what are we going to make mandatory and what is going to be sort of a suggestion [...] We do offer all these things, some of these things have only been offered at the full time level, some at the hourly staff level. So it's like trying to balance that and then always prioritize that we want the kids to come here and we want them to be safe.[...] because the kids are coming in and opening up to them [youth workers] with more, and have different lived experiences [...] So I'm trying to make sure we're covering all of our bases without overwhelming people, but it's an ongoing process is what it is. (Michelle)

In this excerpt, Michelle described that she (as a manager) tried to equip the hourly youth workers with as many inclusivity trainings as they could while also not overwhelming them, having acknowledged most of the hourly staff had commitments outside of MLSE LP. In fact, all the hourly workers I interviewed were either working multiple jobs or were juggling school with work. In turn, full-time staff were still navigating how to provide hourly youth workers with the skills needed to support diverse youth members without inundating them with trainings.

Furthermore, women youth workers offered informal support through casual conversations and talk support for youth members which helped foster connection and feelings of trust with youth in the facility. However, youth workers did not have a complex understanding of the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ community which may hinder their ability to foster trust and connection with gender diverse youth. Moreover, informal support may be more supportive for cisgender and heterosexual youth in SFD.

3.3 RQ (2)

How might MLSE LP's SFD programs help to achieve health and gender equity in communities that may be experiencing gender-based violence?

As highlighted in the literature review, women, girls, and gender diverse people are at a heightened risk of GBV, and some people are at higher risk due to additional oppressions faced,

including racialized women and girls and gender diverse people. This research question contributed to understanding how SFD programs are used as vehicles for gender and health equity in communities at a heightened risk of GBV.

3.3.1 Women and Girl-specific Opportunities in SFD

SFD has been used as a tool for reaching development goals, including gender and health equity, in marginalized communities. To understand how gender equity was being achieved, I first explored how gender was conceptualized by research participants. Findings revealed that participants understood gender as a binary system—focusing entirely on cisgender women in relation to cisgender men. Thus, gender equity was understood as equity for males and females, rather than equity for all genders (with an implicit understanding that gender operates on a spectrum). For instance, when I asked a youth worker how MLSE LP’s programs were gender inclusive, she said “I know that there's programs that are specifically for girls” (Danielle). Additionally, staff members expressed that there were specific programs and nights dedicated to women only: “We have specific women's programming so that’s Monday night. So, it's all women staff and all women participants, like young girls coming into the space” (Olive). One of the managers shared “I think having girls’ night is important and creates a separate space for girls in the building” (Andy). Clearly, interviewees interpreted my question about gender inclusivity as inclusivity for women and girls, which falls in line with other sociocultural studies of sport and gender (Cooky & Messner, 2018; Meier 2000; Messner, 2010; Saavedra, 2009). The organization deemed it important to have women and girl-specific programming to help women thrive in sport spaces that have traditionally been dominated by men.

For girls to participate in sport they actually need to gain acceptance first before they can give it their all and excel. So the process for girls and youth who identify as girls and boys entering into sport is different. (Michelle)

One of the youth mentors, Allie, expressed that the girls specific programming on Monday closed early: “It closes early because they don't want girls leaving in the dark.” This is consistent with feminist literature that reflects women’s fear of walking alone or being out at night and the reactive and preventive measures they take to protect themselves (Meyer & Post, 2006). The preventive measure MLSE LP takes to protect women by closing early relates to the TVIC principle wherein organizations and individuals understand how violence impacts people’s lives and behaviour (Wathen & Varcoe, 2021). TVIC services avoid seeing trauma as only something that happened in the past, and recognize potential risks that may cause further harm, prioritizing safety for survivors of GBV (Wathen & Varcoe, 2019).

Modes of gender equity at MLSE LP were specific to the inclusion of women and girls programming. Two women I interviewed spoke to how they were positively impacted by the ‘Empower Her’ program run by MLSE LP. Amy shared:

I was on the Empower Her call [...] and they had a bunch of female speakers and basically you could see the youth on the call in the chat, and there were a lot of girls from full elementary school classes coming on the call. And I was just sitting there thinking ‘oh my gosh, if I was 8 or 10 and I saw these amazing women doing insane things with their lives and careers, and they look like me, [...], I would think, this could be me one day’ [...]

Findings indicated that women and girls were positively impacted by the women- and girl-specific programming and felt well supported by these programs at MLSE LP. This is supported by sociocultural studies in SFD that illustrated women sport role models are an important element to increase the participation of girls and women in sport and development (Meier & Saavedra, 2009). When I spoke with a participant about why she started attending MLSE LP, she specifically spoke about their programming targeted for women such as Empower Her. “It's my favorite [Empower Her] to this day I speak about it, and I think it resonates with me a lot as well.” (Luiza) Indeed, participating in the women and girl-specific programs helped support

feelings of confidence in women at MLSE LP. This is in line with TVIPA practices that create supportive approaches to physical activity that can help address health inequities (Darroch et al., 2018).

Understanding gender as binary does not necessarily negate the presence of TVIPA in SFD programming since there aren't any TVIC principles that explicitly assert gender as non-binary. However, it does mean that programs may not be inclusive for people who fall outside of gender norms because their existence threatens the idea that gender is non-binary. For instance, when I asked one of the managers if they found the programming was supportive for gender non-binary participants, she responded "Not necessarily. In my personal opinion, I think this is an area we can be better at" (Andy). When I asked a coach assistant if she felt the programming was supportive for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, she described:

Yeah, so I think we realized one of the one of our members in the 11 to 14 group is part of that LGBTQ group, and I think [a coach] actually brought a special a guest in for one of the programs who is also a part of that group [...] I think we're pretty open about things like that. (Katherine)

As Katherine described, providing LGBTQ representation was important in facilitating inclusivity for that youth member. This is consistent with SFD literature that touts the importance of having diverse representation in SFD spaces, including queer representation (Carney & Chawansky, 2016; Ferreira Gomes et al., in press). Having diverse staff members that identify with one or several of the acronyms in the 2SLGBTQ+ community is important in facilitating safe and inclusive spaces for gender diverse youth. I discuss this issue in more depth in Section 4.1.1.

3.3.2 Navigating Gender Relations and GBV in SFD Programs

The ingrained supremacy of masculinity in sport continues to reign in SFD spaces through the relational forces that ignore or subordinate women (Oxford & Spaaij, 2019, p. 54).

The subordination of women in sport, in turn, fosters unequal gender power relations between men and women. The findings of this project highlight that SFD programs do not necessarily address gender power relations. For instance, participants and staff members noted that they struggled to navigate their gendered experiences as women in SFD. When reflecting on her experience coaching male youth, a woman coach shared: “It's definitely hard at times to like, really grasp their attention or have them take me seriously” (Olive). She explained how she felt it was much easier for her to obtain the boys’ attention in the 11 to 14 age bracket than in the programs with male youth ages 18 to 29. A coach assistant echoed similar sentiments:

It happens more with the older guys when I do coach, because [...] a lot of these guys are literally my age, so [...] they're like oh Emily's my friend, I don't have to necessarily listen to her. And then at the same time, they [male coaches] kind of be a little disrespectful, and instead of letting me handle it myself they [male coaches] wanted to swoop in and save the day. (Emily)

This is consistent with SFD literature that illustrates research concerned with transforming gender relations in mixed-gender SFD contexts is scant (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Oxford & Spaaij, 2019). In line with Emily’s knowledge, I noted that male coaches usually took the lead on mixed gender program days: “One of the volunteers expressed her frustration to me and a couple other volunteers that the youth members weren’t listening. Another volunteer responded and said she feels the kids only listen to the male coaches” (Reflexive Field Notes, December 7, 2021).

During my fieldwork, I also noticed there seemed to be more women youth mentors than men, which prompted me to ask one of the male coaches why this might be: “When I asked one of the male coaches why most youth mentors seemed to be girls, he responded that it was because girls were more soft spoken and gentle” (Reflexive Field Notes, November 9, 2021). It seemed that traditional notions of feminine and masculine characteristics were still popularly regarded as truths in the space.

GBV can manifest in overtly physically and sexually violent ways (Mittal & Singh, 2020). It may also be evident in a more covert manner that is not necessarily physically or sexually violent, but makes people feel unsafe and uncomfortable in spaces (Jaffray, 2020). At the tail end of my interview with a community member volunteering in the space, she mentioned that a question I asked about trauma had resonated with her:

When you said how do they support people who are like experiencing any kind of trauma... so it was never... nothing ever happened.... But [...] I was feeling a little bit uncomfortable with somebody... and, you know, I didn't do anything about it, because I didn't [...] think it was a big deal. (Jessica)

As stated in my literature review, violence encountered by women and 2SLGBTQ+ people in public spaces are often dismissed as ‘minor’ and thus rendered as non-violent (Bows & Fileborn, 2020). Knowing this, I told Jessica that it might not seem like a big deal, but she shouldn’t be made to feel uncomfortable by anyone in the space. Jessica then shared more about the incident that made her uncomfortable:

It's things that I think are a little bit normal here. [...] People are comfortable hugging, [...] And to me, I'm not really super comfortable with that. So... there was just a person who just kept touching me, not like *inappropriately*, but just like, you know, putting their arm around me, hugging me, whatever. And to me like, I don't really like that. So that's why I didn't say anything, and that person left. (Jessica)

Jessica did not disclose to me who the perpetrator was to me. In another interview with a coach assistant, she shared:

In terms of like, gender equity, specifically, I don't know if we've had any, like, major discussions about it. But there were [...] specific times where we've had a new staff come in with a supervisory position and [...] he was very inappropriate with how he would touch [...] the women coaches. [...] coming in calling me sweetie pie, [...] calling you baby. [...] and he was an older guy [...] putting his arm around my waist, like, up here [points to upper chest] [...] apparently some of the woman had complained to him about it already. [...] then I had complained to one of the female staff, and she was like, he's still doing this? [...] and that evening, I got an email saying he was immediately terminated from Launchpad, like that night. And he couldn't work at any more MLSE positions at all. (Emily)

In order to provide a safe space for staff and participants that experiencing GBV, SFD programs should consider establishing and reinforcing the importance of physical boundaries, especially with male staff members (e.g. educating male staff members on physical boundaries and reinforce a no-tolerance policy). Another interviewee also spoke about how some male staff members were not cognizant of physical boundaries: “Everybody is considered to be friends. You know? When everybody's friends and stuff like that, there's certain lines that are crossed, for sure” (Larissa). When participants were asked how the programs were supportive for people experiencing GBV, most participants talked about how staff members responded to violence more generally. Nicole explained, “I think we just view violence as violence, regardless of like the context that it's in, whether it's gender-based or race based.” Staff members would also guide youth to MLSE LP’s counselling support services if they felt the youth member experiencing violence needed clinical support. This was the usual protocol, as Andy noted:

Yeah, I would say we're not like clinical experts on how to support somebody, you know, going through that. So, I think that's where our partnership with Lumenus [counselling service] like, it's really helpful. In that we can refer people [...] conversations are coming up that are beyond the scope of the staff's ability [...].

Though MLSE LP offered therapy support for youth and families through their counselling services, I was told the counsellors hadn't been integrated back into the space since MLSE LP reopened in Fall 2021.

A huge piece that I've noticeably missed since I've been back just because they haven't decided how they are going to re-enter them into the space, is through Lumenus, which is formerly Skylark which is our mental health services counsellors that are on-site for youth. (Michelle)

Providing formal talk support is critical in supporting victims and survivors of GBV (Scheer, 2021). However, it wasn't clear how Lumenus counsellors specifically addressed gender-based forms of oppression. Albeit some hourly staff were not too keen on redirecting the youth to

counselling support. Joanne shared that sometimes when the youth workers referred youth to counselling support, the youth stopped returning to MLSE LP.

I understand that that is the only way to do it right now. But I'm just saying, we have lost a lot of kids and trust and there are children where I'm just like I wonder... I wonder... I hope they're okay.

When sharing this, Joanne became emotional and started to cry. In an informal conversation, another youth mentor explained that because counselling sessions occurred in the space and counselors were amongst the youth workers and participants, youth were sometimes embarrassed to return to the space after being referred to counselling. Providing counselling services that were free and accessible to youth members was an incredible feat for MLSE LP, especially since counselling sessions can cost up to \$240 per hour in Canada (Collie, 2019). However, findings indicated that having sessions occur at the facility may discourage some youth members from accessing these services. Findings indicated that conversations regarding GBV prevention were not widely discussed in SFD programs. However, Tiana related my question about GBV prevention to her experience in Peacebuilders.

We did have guys and girls being a part of the program [Peacebuilders]. And one time we were talking about walking home and being afraid to walk home at night [...] Especially with people who target women when walking home alone [...] And then at the end, the coaches said, you know, as guys, we really need to be actively taking in that gender-based violence is real, especially for women and the LGBT community. [...] They go through this the most, and they're the most impacted by this sort of violence. So, here's what we can do as men to make women feel safer, or what would you like us to do? To help? You know, to feel safer and things like that. (Tiana)

In turn, there is some knowledge being shared regarding the effects of GBV as it relates to the community within the MLSE LP facility. However, based on my findings, GBV and its adverse effects on women, girls, and gender diverse people are not widely addressed MLSE LP's programs as it is in their partner program Peacebuilders. Moreover, SFD cannot achieve gender and health equity for those experiencing GBV without intentionally using intersectional

approaches to interrogate and address the gendered and racial forms of oppression impacting women, girls, and gender diverse people as they manifest within SFD spaces. Furthermore, TVIPA and SFD cannot address GBV concerns (e.g. covert forms of GBV like physical boundary violations) without also interrogating gender relations (Ferreira Gomes et al., in press). In the next section, I discuss how employment and educational opportunities in SFD programs may have helped or hindered equity and inclusion for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

3.3.3 Providing “Inclusive” Opportunities: Gender and Sexual Diversity and Heteronormativity in SFD

A consistent theme that was generated throughout the interview process, as well as in field work, was the theme of opportunity. Research participants spoke about several development opportunities they were given at MLSE LP, specifically MLSE LP’s employment programs that helped youth workers and participants develop their coaching abilities. Literature has shown that women coaches note feeling that their appointment as coaches is due to societal marginalization and subsequent tokenism (Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016). Given the lack of structural programs to develop coaching abilities to be on par with white men, women and people of colour are often undervalued based on their race, gender, and their diverse cultural qualities (Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016, p. 88). MLSE LP referred to their SFD employment programs as SLICE and LIT. Tiana, a woman of colour participant in SLICE, described that one of the benefits of joining MLSE LP’s SFD programs was that she was then given the opportunity to join the employment program SLICE.

I think that one huge benefit was with the first program that I was with, I was able to discover SLICE [...] one of the coaches that I had there, he was able to say, hey, look, there's a program here. There's another opportunity here. You can also come in to play sports whenever you want. And I was like oh wow, that's amazing. (Tiana)

Offering structural programs that advanced youth members' leadership skills was helpful in responding to Tiana's needs as a woman of colour interested in sport, as well as the employment needs of the Moss Park community. As previously discussed in Section 2.2.1, Moss Park is home to many low-income families. Herein, MLSE LP's "plus sport" employment training programs are promising strategies for work reading and employment in youth facing barriers to positive development (Warner et al., 2020). These programs served as both an educational and employment opportunity for youth. The two employment programs, LIT and SLICE, were slightly different in nature. As Olive described:

We do offer different older kids 15 to 18 those employment programs such as SLICE and LIT—which is for Leaders-In-Training—which takes place in the summer, and they're for youth that are a little bit [...] more aware of a professional environment like a workplace. Whereas the SLICE participants have like no background in a part-time job or no understanding of anything that goes into a professional environment sort of thing. Whereas the LITs are a little bit more familiar.

In turn, and based on Olive's description, I could deduce the programs catered to youth of different abilities, which made employment opportunities accessible for all youth—whether or not they had prior workplace experience. The neighbourhoods in which MLSE LP's programs serve face systemic racism and significant educational and economic challenges that constrain occupational attainment among these populations (Warner et al., 2020). MLSE LP supported health equitable opportunities by providing education and employment SFD programs to youth who live in Toronto's most underserved communities. The SLICE program launched in November 2021, when I first started my internship at MLSE LP. Since the program was just beginning, I was able to develop friendships with the participants in the program throughout my time interning. As outlined in my methods chapter, it was paramount that strong, trustworthy, and collaborative relationships were formed with participants and staff members at MLSE LP. By building these relationships, I was able to better understand research participant perspectives

pertaining to programming and uphold the participatory nature of my research. One of the strongest friendships I made was with Tiana, the previously mentioned SLICE participant.

LP started a new plus sport program today. I decided to sit in on the program to see what it was like. The participants and I spent time most of our time in the classroom and played on court afterwards. This is the typical structure of LP's plus-sport programs. At the beginning of the program, we were told by the two staff leaders to write our names and pronouns on a name tag and add whichever stickers we'd like. I sat beside a participant named [Tiana]. I introduced myself to her, and she introduced herself and her brother (Reflexive Field Notes, November 2, 2021).

I noted this encounter specifically because I felt the inclusion of pronouns in the classroom signified that the SFD program was inclusive of diverse gender identities. Using the pronouns associated with a person's gender identity is an important part of the transition process for many transgender and gender non-conforming people (Morris & Van Raalte, 2016). Modeling respectful behaviour about pronoun use and ensuring others honor the pronouns used can help create a safe and welcoming team environment for transgender and gender non-conforming people (Morris & Van Raalte, 2016). Thus, the inclusion of pronouns in the classroom at MLSE LP is also a crucial element in achieving gender equity for gender diverse people. And yet, the use of pronouns did not extend thereafter onto the court. This finding is supported by other studies that confirm SFD programs are largely underpinned by a heteronormative foundation (Ferreira Gomes et al., in press; Hayhurst et al., 2021). Although workplaces and educational institutions are making the shift to pronoun use, sport systems rely on a sex and gender binary structure "and assumes that athletes can be unambiguously separated into the rigid categories of biological sex assigned at birth" (Braumüller et al., 2020, p. 2). Throughout the research, staff members only asserted their pronouns in classroom settings at MLSE LP (and this still seems to be the case). Further, there weren't any visual representations of pride or 2SLGBTQ+ acceptance in the space.

Why don't we have flags of every participant that comes here? They have those in schools [...] why don't we have that here? Why don't we have the bisexuality flag or like the pride flag? [...] Because I'm pretty sure... there's no way that all these participants are straight children. [...] Because there's so many that come into this building! [...] And I feel like if they saw that [the flag], it would make them feel more comfortable or more inclined to speak out about themselves or even just be open with themselves, y'know? (Joanne)

Programs may help achieve gender equity by integrating visual representations of sexual and gender diversity in the facility. Jesse, the trans participant I had grown close with, described that he wished there be a rainbow flag in the space.

When talking with Jesse about all the sayings written on MLSE LP's walls, such as "make your move" and "build grit", he said he wished one of the walls had a rainbow flag or had a cool saying like what they have now but in rainbow colours to show their pride. (Reflexive Field Notes, December 7th, 2021).

All the artwork and sayings on MLSE LP's walls were in purple, green, and blue, as well as the rock-climbing wall. Amongst all the sayings written on MLSE LP's walls meant to uplift youth members, I noted the absence of gay pride or more broadly, 2SLGBTQ+ representation. Further, all interviewees were gender conforming, and as revealed in participant demographic results, were also straight. A lack of 2SLGBTQ+ representation in the space may reinforce the idea that SFD spaces are heteronormative spaces. Jesse, a participant that identified as transgender and gay, mentioned in an informal conversation with me that he felt a couple of the coaches seemed to be homophobic.

Jesse told me he thinks coaches [X] and [Y] are homophobic. When I asked him why, he would say "it's just the vibe I get". I didn't have the same experience or "vibe" with the coaches, but it is important to acknowledge I am gender conforming, and if you didn't ask me, you could assume I'm straight (Reflexive Field Notes, March 1, 2022).

Gender diverse athletes challenge sex segregated sport systems and the conformity of either male or female teams that is required in sporting structures (Braumüller et al., 2020). In turn, gender diverse people are often "Othered" in sport (Cunningham, 2012). Further, providing

visual signs of inclusion like the transgender flag or the pride flag may help support the inclusion of gender diverse identities in SFD. Including gender diverse representation in the space could also help aid in the inclusion of gender diverse youth at MLSE LP. Gender diverse representation should extend to changerooms and washrooms wherein gender-neutral spaces are offered and are made visible and accessible to youth workers and members. MLSE LP currently has a gender-neutral bathroom in their atrium, but only provides gendered bathrooms and changerooms on court. When I told Jesse about the gender-neutral bathroom, he was surprised, stating he had not known about it or noticed it previously since it wasn't on the court (where programs took place).

MLSE LP had outside partnerships with other SFD programs, like New Leaf Foundation which offered yoga programs and Square Circle where youth learn social circus arts like juggling. These programs offer non-traditional sport opportunities for youth interested in more artistic forms of movement. Programs are run by the partnered SFD program coaches and are supervised by an MLSE LP youth mentor. However, when participating in New Leaf and Square Circle programs, there wasn't a big turnout. Programs that were most popular were the more traditional types of sports, like volleyball, ball-hockey, and basketball.

3.4 RQ (3)

How should SFD organizations develop TVISFD programs and assess whether this an appropriate and feasible approach to support gender diverse people and women and girls?

The interviewed hourly youth workers identified a dearth of ways in which SFD can develop gender-inclusive programs that meet the needs of participants experiencing trauma and violence. Indeed, no interviewees were aware of TVI approaches to SFD programs, including TVISFD programs for women, girls and gender diverse people that may be experiencing GBV. Knowing the important role SFD can play in advancing development goals (e.g., gender and

health equity), a youth mentor discussed the integral part staff members play in ensuring these goals are met:

I feel like the staff play a huge role in whatever facility you want to provide [or] whatever space you want to provide. Because they're the first people that they [youth] are coming in and seeing. So, training. Training, training, training! Training for the staff, number one, because some people can be closed minded, and they just see one way and one way only. (Larissa)

As the following excerpt highlights, SFD organizations may attempt to be gender inclusive and be attentive to the needs of participants experiencing trauma and violence, but training staff on TVI approaches and gender inclusivity is necessary to create a SFD space that utilizes TVI approaches and is appropriate for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

3.4.1 Gender and Sexual Health Equity Training: Opportunities and Considerations

Several SFD program's goals centre gender equality, sexual and reproductive health rights, and GBV prevention. However, SFD program staff might not necessarily respond favourably to gender and sexual identities that divert from normative and hegemonic assumptions of gender and sexuality. Findings indicated that hourly youth workers played a key role in the delivery and execution of SFD programming. Thus, to challenge heteronormative sporting structures, SFD programs should consider implementing training for their youth workers focused on gender and sexual health equity. When I asked hourly youth workers about their training, some expressed to me that, because they had been working at the organization for so long (since 2017) they couldn't recall training details. Other youth workers shared that, because they did the training online during the COVID-19 lockdown, they also couldn't recall training details. One youth mentor shared, "I feel like we need more training and more guidance as staff" (Nori). It is, then, important to integrate trainings specifically meant to refresh and increase staff training knowledge. As previously mentioned, managers noted difficulty in providing youth

workers with the necessary training without overwhelming them. TVIPA aims to deconstruct systemic barriers to participation in physical activity, including homophobia and gender discrimination (Health and Wellness Equity Research Group Carleton). Hence, new considerations on how to effectively deliver training to SFD youth workers may be helpful in establishing TVISFD for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

3.4.2 Navigating Difficult Conversations with Youth: Silences and Strategies

When I asked interviewees how the space was supportive for the 2SLGBTQ+ community, including gender diverse people, several youth workers explained that sexual and gender diversity was not discussed in their SFD programs. As Danielle shared, “I don't think there was ever a program where it's, it's just kind of not talked about, if that makes sense, or it's not implemented in any of the programs.” One volunteer explained “I really don't know if they did have like an event or program [...] about like, sexual identity, or any of these topics” (Luiza). When I asked interviewees what conversations youth workers were having with the youth, several youth workers said programs focused on life skills, such as building self-esteem. “It's like life skills we have to build up and each week we have a new life skill, for example, grit or self-esteem” (Larissa). When I asked another youth worker the same question, she shared:

I feel like everything is [...] Let's get youth ready for jobs. Like let's get youth ready to go into the world. But there's nothing like, let's support youth about what's going on in life. Right now. Let's talk about how social media is affecting them. Let's talk about, like, how they're struggling with their sexuality. (Allie)

It seemed that some youth workers did not feel well-equipped to navigate challenging conversations with youth about their gender, sexuality, and other personal day-to-day concerns.

Another youth worker explained:

I kind of just wish that in training, they taught you more how—one on one—how to have a conversation with children. Because that's something I had to even learn, and you're meeting a new kid every day, so every conversation is different. (Nori)

Several youth workers echoed Nori in that many of them felt unequipped to address some of the challenges youth members faced. “Probably the first couple of weeks I was here was my training. But no specific training on how to really deal or talk to kids, which I thought before was an issue” (Danielle). Danielle noted that she had thought this was an issue prior to our interview, but had not voiced her concerns to upper staff, likely due to her own uncertainty. Another youth member described that she also sometimes struggled in knowing if she was providing appropriate care to youth members: “That's the biggest challenge I have to face, addressing youth like that [youth that don't listen]. Because you never want to be really harsh with them, because you never know what they're going through” (Nicole). In turn, training SFD youth workers on how to navigate difficult conversations with youth members may be important to consider when delivering SFD programs and TVIPA. Several participants noted that they slowly learned how to navigate difficult conversations and have patience with youth over time working at MLSE LP. For example, Nicole shared that she learned over time how to be empathetic and understanding of youth:

When I first started coaching, I would get angry, like, oh, why is this participant like not listening? Like, we should send them to the atrium, because they're not listening. They're like, they're diminishing the quality of the program for the other participants. But I've kind of learned that them acting out in ways like that may be because of things that they experience outside of the space. Or maybe things that they experience within the space that I that I don't know about, you know? So, like, you kind of have to be empathetic and see where they're coming from. Because it's not always the case that they're just acting out just to act out for no reason. You know?” (Nicole)

Several youth workers described that they gained patience over time working with youth in the space. Considering this, it may be beneficial for new youth workers to learn and shadow youth workers who have been in the space for longer. In turn, this may help youth workers learn how to be patient with youth that may be experiencing trauma and violence. A couple

interviewees noted that they've seen staff lose their patience with youth. For instance, one interviewee shared: "I've seen a lot of coaches like, explode. And I have to be like, 'hey, if you explode on these youth, they're not gonna want to come back.' Like, this is supposed to be their safe space [...]" (Emily). Indeed, keeping MLSE LP a safe space for members was critical in supporting the lives of youth who came into the space. Hereby, being cognisant of language, both verbal and body language, were critical in delivering appropriate and effective programs to support youth that may have been experiencing trauma and violence. Therefore, considering how to make language more accessible for youth members in SFD organizations may be critical in developing TVISFD to support women, girls, and gender diverse people.

3.4.3 Assessing Program Efficacy and Appropriateness: Ongoing Communication and Evaluation

Many staff members deemed inclusive and sensitive language as critical in delivering appropriate and effective support to youth members. MLSE LP's staff members responsible for facilitating educational and employment programs that took place in classrooms at MLSE LP used inclusive language with youth members and were cognizant of pronoun use. As previously noted, pronouns weren't being used by staff during on court SFD programs. Danielle expressed, "I think [...] that's [...] for staff to remind our members too, that people do have different pronouns and identify as different things". Though, one interviewee described an instance wherein a youth member who was attending the all-girls programming was transitioning, in which case, the staff were told to use gender neutral language rather than she/her.

"It was Monday, so it was girls' night and during girls' night, we usually refer to everyone like, "hey ladies! Hey girls!" But we did have an individual who came to girls' night, but the individual identified as a male. So, I had one of my co-worker's kind of pull me aside and pull some of the other coaches aside and say to us, you know, we have to be more mindful of our language, because [...] And then she let us know that the individual identifies as male. (Nicole)

This prompted Nicole to consider the implementation of a gender inclusive guide; a guide which—my findings suggest—may be quite helpful for other SFD organizations in developing TVI programs to support gender diverse people, women and girls. Nicole noted: “I decided that I wanted to do an inclusive language guide, specifically, about like, addressing people and communicating with people of different sexual orientations, races and abilities.”

By starting to discuss the way particular language is used and deployed in SFD programs, youth were given the opportunity to reflect on different perspectives by assessing how something they may deem as harmless language, could be harmful to a collective outside of their experience. Nicole expressed that because of her responsibilities outside of her job at MLSE LP, she was unable to dedicate time to creating the toolkit. In a similar vein, Danielle also mentioned it was important to communicate language clearly:

Our job is just to make sure that registration and programming and everything that's in the administrative side is good and flowing. It's very important because a lot of these kids are—I mean for a lot of these parents—English isn't their first language. So, it's very important that we communicate very clearly. (Danielle)

By helping youth and their families understand how language is made inclusive in the facility, the use of language that perpetuates heteronormativity and discrimination can be challenged and addressed in a way that still respects cultural differences. Moreover, interviewees noted the importance of having ongoing communication with staff from all levels. MLSE LP programs facilitate this by holding debriefs before programming begins, to update the staff on new activities, protocols, and events. “They'll let us know any things that are happening within the company” (Emily). It is also an important opportunity for staff to relay messages about what is going on and affecting the local community. “They'll tell us different things that we should pay attention to, so if kids are having certain issues, if there have been issues in the space in general”

(Joanne). For instance, when there was a shooting in the local community, staff were made aware of the incident in their debrief and how this might be affecting youth.

There was a shooting at a close by community. Or maybe it was this community actually, it's not that far, maybe like 10-minute walk away. But actually, somebody that a lot of people here knew, died. So, during the following week [...] we actually had the supervisor [...] speak to us at the beginning of programming, just saying, like, you know, I'm sure you guys heard about the shooting, if you haven't, this is what happened. And a lot of people may not take this situation well, so kinda like, be really sensitive, like with what you're saying what you're doing today. And, you know, and if someone needs support, just like, send them to youth mentor or to Skylark [counselling support]. (Nicole)

Moreover, maintaining ongoing communication with all organizational members is important in assessing the efficacy of SFD programming implementing a TVI approach.

Organizations implementing TVI approaches to service delivery require robust ways to assess their efficacy (Wathen, et al., 2021). At MLSE LP, programs are assessed for appropriateness through evaluation and measurement carried out by their research team, and the team plays an integral part in the development of TVISFD. However, the majority of SFD research imparts a heteronormative framework that serves to prevent nuanced understandings of how sexuality and gender matter in programming that aspires to achieve development through/with sport (Carney & Chawansky, 2016). Thus, when considering how to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of a TVI approach, SFD programs should explore nuanced understandings of gender and sexual diversity and consider how existing policies and protocols might help or hinder the inclusion of gender and sexual minorities. In turn, having comprehensive evaluation tools, maintaining ongoing communication with all levels of staff, and providing youth workers with training focused on gender and sexual health equity are important to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of TVI approaches in SFD programming for women, girls, and gender diverse people.

Chapter 4: Discussion, Conclusions & Recommendations

In the following chapter, I provide an overview of the overall ‘findings’ of this study that were explored in the previous chapter, providing brief summaries of the major themes discovered during this community-based FPAR study. I then discuss the scholarly implications and key contributions of this study, including how this research adds to the fields of SFD and community-based FPAR research, TVI approaches to physical activity and program delivery, and provides insight to qualitative research. Furthermore, I identify the challenges and limitations involved in this study, and suggest future research ideas that may be pursued by scholars in academia or myself in future research studies. Finally, I provide recommendations to MLSE LP based on my research and findings and offer suggestions to SFD organizations interested in implementing TVIPA.

4.1 Discussion

Returning to the purpose of this study, I set out to explore how TVI approaches to SFD programs address the challenges of women, girls, and gender diverse people living in marginalized communities, with a specific focus on supporting women, girls, and gender diverse people that may be experiencing GBV. Through this research, I was able to identify key organizational features that aligned with TVIPA, such as: offering free admission, including self-identified women-only hours, having welcoming and approachable staff, and creating safe, non-violent environments (Darroch et al., 2018; Health and Wellness Equity Research Group Carleton, 2020). Furthermore, MLSE LP most notably incorporated TVIPA to their SFD programming by following two key tenets specific to TVIC: 1) creating emotionally and physically safe environments; and 2) providing a strengths-based and capacity-building approach to support coping and resilience (Wathen & Varcoe, 2021; Darroch et al., 2022). MLSE LP’s

staff facilitated emotional and physical safety for participants by building trust and connection with youth members. For instance, results illustrated that when youth workers were faced with situations wherein youth were facing community-related trauma and violence, their relational experiences (e.g. as Moss Park community members and youth workers) informed their abilities to respond appropriately to the needs of youth. At the same time, there remains more opportunities for SFD organizations to develop TVI programs for women, girls, and gender diverse youth that may be experiencing GBV. For instance, in aligning with a TVIPA approach, SFD providers and staff at all levels of the institution can develop an awareness of how racism, poverty, sexism, and other forms of oppression intersect and exclude people from physical activity (Darroch et al., in press). SFD programs can also foster opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection by consulting a diverse set of participants (including gender diverse people) in the construction of programming and delivery. In this section, I discuss; how safe spaces are cultivated in SFD, race and gender politics in development discourses, and the delivery of TVISFD programs.

4.1.1 Cultivating Safe Space: Considering Gender and Sexual Diversity

When interviewing youth mentors and coaches, interviewees emphasized the importance of training, specifically on navigating conversations about gender (including GBV) and sexuality with youth. A study by Darroch et al. (2022) exploring physical activity experiences of pregnant and parenting individuals that have experienced trauma identified “gendered trauma, violence, and/or discrimination” as a large contributing factor to experiencing barriers to physical activity engagement (p. 26). Experiences of gendered trauma and violence point to a need for tailored services designed to support [gender] specific concerns (Darroch et al., 2022). Herein, training SFD youth workers on gender and sex, sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health in

conjunction with TVIPA practices may provide a strong framework to support women, girls, and gender diverse people experiencing GBV. The findings of this thesis illustrated that MLSE LP offered a safety net for youth members in the community, specifically cisgender and heterosexual women of colour. However, the SFD facility was embedded in a heteronormative sporting structure and thus may not be perceived as a safety net by gender diverse youth and 2SLGBTQ+ youth. This is consistent with literature on SFD facilities that illustrate how conventional norms of mainstream hetero-patriarchal society permeate these spaces (see Válková, 2021). As previously iterated, most youth members that attend MLSE LP are people of colour and thus many of my research participants were women of colour. “The experiences of women coaches of colour in sport must be understood from the standpoint of synergistic effects of multiple forms of oppression that intersect to further marginalize women of colour beyond what women and men of colour endure” (Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016, p. 81). Put differently, the multiple and diverse ways in which racism, sexism, homophobia, and gender discrimination intersect must be considered to equitably support women, girls, and gender diverse youth that may be experiencing GBV.

Indeed, SFD organizations may provide a safety net for youth living in marginalized circumstances; albeit not without ‘holes’ in the net, wherein gender diverse and 2SLGBTQ+ youth are most likely to fall through. As described by Jill Andrew, ONDP candidate for the riding of Toronto-St. Paul’s, we must remember the crucial need of a social safety net without holes: “We have seen the folks who have fallen through the holes disproportionately. Especially during this pandemic, but long before” (Andrew, 2022). A TVIPA approach, then, may be helpful to address obstacles individuals face when participating in SFD programs, including gender discrimination and heterosexism (see Health and Wellness Equity Research Group

Carleton, 2020). This is crucial to consider, particularly because youth are more likely to experience trauma if they have been unhoused, are 2SLGBTQ+, and/or are from racialized communities (Bobadilla et al., 2021).

Conversely, and as previously mentioned, the results of this study showed that when youth workers were faced with situations in which youth were facing community-related trauma and violence, their relational experiences lent to their ability to respond appropriately to the needs of youth. Indeed, having community member representation amongst staff helped support and foster cultural safety for youth entering the space. Cultural safety—a key spoke of TVIC—ensures practices are free of racism and discrimination, and people are supported to draw strengths from their identity, culture, and community (Bobadilla et al., 2021). However, youth workers also shared that they were uncertain how to provide support for youth members that identified as gender diverse, and more broadly, 2SLGBTQ+ community members. Thus, findings suggested that safety was a subjective experience for youth since how safety was defined varied on youth member experiences. This is consistent with literature on TVIC that has illustrated cultural safety is a subjective experience wherein the individual determines whether the service is safe (Cullen et al., 2021).

In understanding how organizations may not be objectively emotionally and physically safe environments, one must consider different individual identities, such as gender, sexuality, and athletic ability. For instance, research has shown individuals who identify more strongly as athletes express more sexual prejudices than athletes with a low athletic ability (Braumüller et al., 2020). In addition, transgender athletes have been seen as outsiders in sport “because their gender identity did not match ways that sport traditionally has been organized” (Cunningham, 2012, p. 9). When speaking to youth and staff at MLSE LP, it became evident that most

members were interested in sports. For instance, staff members expressed that everyone was there because they had a pre-emptive interest in traditional forms of sport, like soccer and basketball. In addition, several interviewees discussed that the youth coming into the space already had an interest in sport. What wasn't as clear was if the organization was encouraging youth that may have otherwise avoided sport, like sexual and gender minorities. It is important to consider the experiences of minorities in SFD to facilitate the inclusion of all identities. As Crenshaw (1989) explained, the goal should be "to facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups for whom it can be said: 'When they enter, we all enter'" (p. 167). We must then, in considering the heteronormative tendencies of SFD, centre the experiences of gender and sexual minorities in TVISFD.

The findings of this study that illustrated an absence of gender and sexual diversity and queer identity discussion in TVISFD is consistent with Carney and Chawansky's (2016) findings that "there are no instances in the academic literature of how [SFD] programs actively interrogate heteronormative values and practices" (p. 6). Further, despite including discussions on physical literacy, self-esteem, and other personal developments, TVISFD practices may not be actively incorporating discussions that disrupt or address heteronormative subjectivities in sport. Having limited exposure to the gender and sexually diverse staff may also reinforce heteronormative and gender binary ideals of SFD for youth. A study by Hilpp (2021) found that the presence of queer sporting role models provided hope for other members of the queer community in SFD spaces. Hilpp (2021) further described that queer role models' "acts of authenticity are acts of queer rebellion against the heteronormative demands of others" (p. 8). In other words, the mere presence of queer bodies in SFD spaces may resist heteronormative discourses, thus increasing inclusion for queer individuals in existing SFD systems. Although, it

is important to consider how other participants' hegemonic ideals of sport can put queer people at risk of losing their sense of belonging in SFD spaces. For example, Hilpp (2021) described that one SFD participant explained that "[SFD] is a welcoming organization but not everyone in [SFD] is welcoming" (p. 7). This is symbolic of deeply embedded heteronormativity and anti-queerness that must be actively addressed in development spaces. We can move toward queering TVISFD spaces through mechanisms that raise awareness of the discriminatory effects of homophobia and trans-negativity, such as incorporating visual representation of people with a diversity of gender expressions and sexual identities, signalling that [2SLGBTQ+] people are welcomed and respected in the space (Braumüller et al., 2020).

4.1.2 Race and Gender Politics in Development Discourses

Many participants highlighted the importance of having racial representation in MLSE LP and how this representation created safety for them. When discussing gender representation in the space, many participants spoke about the importance of female representation and the presence of girls-only programming and events. MLSE LP has responded to the underrepresentation of women and girls in sport by creating targeted programming and events for them such as Empower Her and GIRL (Girls In Real Life). MLSE LP has also made a commitment to anti-Black racism focused on dismantling barriers to equitable participation (MLSE Foundation, 2022), and have asserted their anti-Black racism stance on the court by incorporating "Black Lives Matter" signage written in bold letters spanning across the floor. These are indeed important strides made toward furthering anti-racist and feminist work, and in considering the gendered and racialized identities of participants, necessary ones. However, viewing racism and sexism as singular issues fails to account for the ways in which gender and racial social identities intersect to uniquely oppress women of colour. This notion of addressing

social identities as singular issues is further explained by Crenshaw (1989) who described that the failure to embrace the complexities of identity is due to a way of thinking about discrimination which structures politics so that struggles are categorized as singular issues. In turn, it is important to consider how women and girls' experiences in SFD have generally focused on white, middle-class, heterosexual, and cisgender women (Carney & Chawansky, 2016). Therefore, SFD anti-Black racism and anti-sexism initiatives *must* consider intersectional identities so as not to conflate or ignore the differences within racialized and gendered groups that contribute to tensions among these groups.

The ways in which racism and sexism intersect to increase the risk of GBV in women of colour compared to white women must also be considered in SFD initiatives. It is commonly understood that TVIPA and SFD can enhance inclusion, resilience, and empowerment for women and girls experiencing GBV. On the other hand, focusing on the similarities between women and girls' marginalization ignores the diverse experiences of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, age, etc. Further, SFD programs often aim to follow a strengths-based approach, wherein programs focus on the strengths of community members and individuals. Though providing a strengths-based framework is a tenet of TVIC, I would argue that focusing on individual strengths and not on their deficits does not necessarily address interpersonal and systemic challenges of participants since—to address challenges faced by community members—one must first establish what challenges the community faces, which could be understood as focusing on deficits. Therefore, implementing intersectional feminist thought, which critically examines the intersections of racism, sexism, and classism that relegate Black women to subordinate positions in Western society (Carter-Francique, 2011), would help reorient SFD from focusing on *individual strengths* to instead *challenging and interrogating*

systems of power that lend to the subordination of Black women in the first place. This is consistent with TVIPA which requires that organizations develop an awareness of systemic forms of exclusion, including (but not limited to) racism, poverty, and sexism (Darroch et al., in press).

In addition, SFD programs geared to women and girls can reinforce the idea that gender is binary, rather than acknowledging gender is a social construction that lies on a spectrum (Hayhurst et al., 2021). Following the Western gender binary system upholds heteronormative ideologies that assume men and women are fixed categories of gender and excludes gender diverse people. On the other hand, TVIPA requires individuals across all institutional levels to develop an awareness of exclusionary mechanisms (Darroch et al., in press), including gender discrimination. Therefore, viewing gender as fluid and dynamic through a TVI lens in SFD programs may challenge gender norms, binary constructions of gender, and enhance gender equity.

4.1.3 Delivering TVISFD

Developing a TVI approach to the delivery of employment and skills development programs for vulnerable youth is likely to be more effective at engaging youth who may not have previously participated in such programming, while also enhancing the quality-of-service delivery for all youth (Bobadilla et al., 2021). In SFD literature, there is little insight into how TVISFD may be integrated effectively and appropriately when serving girls, women, and gender diverse youth. In exploring the ways MLSE LP utilizes a TVI approach, I found that it was important for staff members to be cognizant of the language they used when communicating with youth members. This is consistent with literature on sociocultural studies of sport and research on TVIPA that suggests organizations and providers should take up the use of inclusive and

sensitive language. For instance, Braumüller et al. (2020) found that the use of inclusive language and dialogue in organized sport raises awareness of the discriminatory effects of homophobic and trans-negative language. In a similar vein, using inclusive and invitational language has also been considered an important aspect of TVIPA (Health and Wellness Equity Research Group Carleton, 2020). By starting to discuss the use of language in SFD programs, youth are given the opportunity to reflect on different perspectives and assess how something they may deem as harmless language can be harmful to a collective outside of their experience. Sports are thus assumed to contribute to inclusion by bringing people together; however, just as the existence of SFD can lead to inclusion, the absence of inclusive dimensions in SFD can foster discriminatory experiences in sport. In addition, by helping youth understand the (un)intended consequences of using certain language, language that perpetuates heteronormativity and discrimination can be challenged and addressed in a way that still respects cultural differences. By working to dismantle the social construction of offensive words, youth can begin to shift their understandings of heteronormative, hegemonic practices in inadvertent ways.

Currently TVISFD programs have mostly focused on singularly marginalized identity groups, such as “Shape Your Life,” which offers programs for trans-identifying persons and women, or “Soccer Without Borders,” which serves refugee and asylee youth, underserved girls, and English language learners (Shape Your Life, 2018; Soccer Without Borders, 2022). As previously mentioned, research should consider the use of invitational and inclusive language in asserting the inclusion of diverse identities—with specific attention given to intersectional nuances for SFD programs focused on GBV. Also, the importance of body language was significant in that it has not been characterized with the same importance as verbal language in

TVIPA and SFD literature. Taken together, more research is needed that explores how body language effects youth experiences in these spaces.

Some participants noted that programming offered families childcare, since MLSE LP was somewhere where parents were able to drop off their kids after school. This is consistent with other findings regarding MLSE LP programs, wherein McSweeney (2021) noted that parents may implicitly view SFD programs as a way for parents to receive free childcare. Moreover, “parents may be benefitting from free of charge SFD programs while not promoting SFD goals (e.g., gender equality, education) which may actually be more detrimental to the long-term vision of SFD to stimulate social change” (McSweeney, 2021, p. 535). In other words, it may be challenging for TVISFD programs to help achieve gender and health equity amongst their youth if parents view these programs as a form of childcare and aren’t as supportive of long-term gender and health equity goals. However, meeting long-term SFD equity goals in a Canadian context might involve providing childcare considering “the absence of quality, affordable, and accessible Canada-wide early learning and childcare services has negative consequences on women, children and families and is also a barrier to women and gender-diverse people seeking to rebuild lives free from violence and poverty” (Dale et al., 2021, p. 128). This then implies that providing childcare services may be critical in supporting the needs of women, girls, and gender diverse people in Canada. Providing TVISFD program participants with contextually appropriate supports may then enhance community equity goals. Further, TVISFD, SFD, and TVIPA programs should collaboratively affirm their short-term and long-term equity goals with parents and caregivers, in addition to youth members, to help foster contextually appropriate community equity goals that can effectively lead to broader social change.

The abovementioned points relate to work by Klein (2020), who noted that “[MLSE LP] programs tend to emphasize individual-level behavioural change to participants” (p. 14), and that SFD programs address the manifestation of systemic problems “rather than their roots” (p. 76). In a similar vein, I found that MLSE LP programs provided responsive care, addressing problems associated with trauma and violence as they manifested in the space. For example, and as many participants noted, MLSE LP provided several inclusive educational and employment opportunities for youth. Such opportunities should be central to TVISFD since youth who have experienced trauma face persistent barriers to employment, in part because trauma affects youths’ ability to engage in programs or achieve employment success (Bobadilla et al., 2021). Moreover, MLSE LP programs provided at-risk youth with employment and education opportunities which contributed to many participants’ positive perceived health. In responding to the needs of the Moss Park community, MLSE LP also provided other supports for youth, including (but not limited to) access to food, mental health counselling, and girls-only SFD programming.

Though MLSE LP’s efforts are laudable, they may not solve the precarity of employment for these youth, nor can they solve other systemic (and gendered) inequities faced by the community. Consequently, the underlying causes of systemic disadvantage remain unaddressed in and through these programs’ activities. Van Ingen’s (2016) research on Shape Your Life, a SFD program serving low-income racialized women and transgender individuals, illustrated that trauma-informed programs are still limited in their ability to “wholly respond to individuals’ trauma” (p. 474). This is consistent with literature on TVI approaches that have described TVI practices as insufficient in tackling structural and systemic inequities faced by youth, such as

those from low-income backgrounds, Indigenous youth, Black youth, women, girls, and gender diverse youth (Bobadilla et al., 2021; Ponc et al., 2016).

The results of this study showed that SFD programs may offer support that aligns with the principles of TVIC; however, without an intentional effort given to dismantle cis-heteronormative ideologies of conventional norms in sport, SFD programs that develop TVI programs cannot wholly address challenges faced by women, girls, and gender diverse people that may be experiencing GBV. Additionally, TVIPA may not be able to provide safe spaces for all survivors and victims of GBV since, as previously discussed, safety is subjective. That is, without a complex understanding of trauma and violence and their impacts on youth lives and behaviours, SFD youth workers may not be able to recognize help-seeking behaviours in women, girls, and gender diverse people who may be experiencing GBV. The help-seeking process amongst victims and survivors of GBV represents three stages, including recognizing and defining the situation as unmanageable, deciding to seek help, and accessing assistance from formal or informal avenues to remedy the situation (Scheer, 2021). Using a TVI approach can help youth workers facilitate access to formal and informal avenues of support for women, girls, and gender diverse people. Formal avenues of support for victims and survivors of GBV can include seeking mental health, medical, legal, advocacy, and housing services, whereas informal avenues may include asking friends, family, or co-workers for emotional support or for a safe place to stay (Scheer, 2021). MLSE LP programs offer counselling services, which acts as formal support for families, youth, and staff. Some participants were well familiarized with the counselling services, whilst others were seemingly unsure how to access or provide access to their counselling support. TVISFD organizations should thus consider ways to actively promote formal support—such as MLSE LP’s mental health counselling—to youth workers, participants,

and their families. Informal avenues of support increase GBV victims and survivors' sense of self-efficacy and sense of ability to adapt in future instances of threat (Scheer, 2021).

Findings also illustrated that hourly staff members, especially youth mentors, offered informal support to youth by conversing with them. As illustrated in my findings, since many hourly staff are community members, they are attuned to the experiences of youth entering the space. Put differently, the emotional support that staff provide is critical for supporting the safety and protection of youth and part in parcel of providing TVISFD programs. However, youth mentors noted that they found it challenging to navigate conversations about gender (including GBV) and sexuality with youth. In these cases, conversations regarding gender, sexuality, and GBV may have been dismissed, or—as noted by staff—passed off to another staff member. Dismissive attitudes may act as barriers to accessing informal support for persons experiencing GBV (Scheer, 2021), and without understanding the reaction to their underreaction, organizational staff may inadvertently enact these barriers. Further, the violence that women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities (Crenshaw, 1991). In turn, TVISFD programs may consider implementing training that features TVI practices and considers the needs of community members' intersectional experiences. By addressing the needs and problems of those who are most disadvantaged, others who are singularly disadvantaged would also benefit (Crenshaw, 1989). Further SFD organizations can implement TVI training that focuses on how to navigate conversations around gender, sex, and sexuality, as well as sexual and reproductive health, that is specific to the intersecting needs of community members experiencing the interlocking effects of racism, sexism, and GBV.

4.1 Scholarly Implications and Key Contributions

In this section, I discuss the scholarly implications and key contributions of this study, including its theoretical contributions and contributions to the fields of SFD, TVIC, and TVIPA.

Intersectionality and intersectional feminist lenses (Carter-Francique, 2011; 2020; Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016; Crenshaw 1989; 1991) were adopted in this research based on a call for feminist scholars working with trauma to provide a more nuanced recognition of trauma that transcends its neurobiological basis and considers the sociopolitical context of women's lives (van Ingen, 2020). Using intersectionality, I was able to better acknowledge and understand participants' different social identities and how these social identities found expression in constructing social group dynamics (Crenshaw, 1991). This lens thus responded to the desires of research participants by considering how forms of oppression intersected to marginalize women of colour in unique ways. This research also attended to this call by using intersectional feminist theories to consider the utility of identity politics in obscuring race identities in feminist discourses (Crenshaw, 1991).

This research study aimed to contribute to the SFD field in several ways. The aim of this study was to explore the use of TVI approaches in and through SFD. To my knowledge, this is the first study of its kind to explicitly explore the use of TVI approaches in relation to SFD programs using intersectional feminism and through a FPAR approach. As previously described in the discussion section, this research responds to process-based inquiries of SFD that have looked to establish approaches that lead to strong sustainability in health-related SFD programs (LeCrom, et al., 2019). However, it should be noted that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the cultivation of safe space (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014) and thus findings that fusing TVI to

SFD provides an opportunity to create safe spaces for participants is inherently context-specific and is therefore not generalizable.

Indeed, recent work by Darroch et al. (2020) noted a lacuna in research that explores how trauma-informed physical activity is taken up in and through physical activity programs. The study herein represents a useful starting point for understanding which specific TVI tenets are beneficial for implementing in SFD programs such as those administered by MLSE LP (creating emotionally and physically safe environments, and providing a strengths-based and capacity-building approach). The ways that services are provided has important impacts on service user's health and well-being (World Health Organization, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and The World Bank, 2018). Exploring the use of TVI approaches in SFD thus provides an important opportunity to better understand how TVIPA may be used to enhance the health and well-being of SFD program participants. What's more, by exploring the ways that TVI tenets may be enacted in SFD programs adds to literature on TVI practice and service delivery. Moreover, this research project contributed to the fields of SFD, TVIC, and TVIPA by 1) advancing research on the use of TVI approaches in SFD; 2) better understanding how TVIPA and SFD may support women, girls, and gender diverse people; and 3) identifying how TVI approaches to SFD may (or may not) advance health and gender equity in communities experiencing GBV.

4.3 Future Research Ideas

There are many opportunities for further research in the TVI/SFD/GBV nexus. Three future research ideas may include: 1) better understanding the covert ways that GBV is perpetrated in SFD and physical activity spaces; 2) evaluating the use of TVIPA principles in a

SFD program; and 3) exploring gender fluid approaches to the delivery of TVIPA and SFD with diverse populations.

4.3.1 Understanding Covert Forms of GBV

Prior to my fieldwork, I posed the following research question “How might MLSE LP’s programs help to achieve health and gender equity in communities that may be experiencing violence?” However, experiences of GBV became less apparent. A couple incidents of covert GBV, specifically unwanted touching, were shared under the pretense that these instances were “non-violent occurrences” (Jessica and Emily). This covert form of GBV was not perceived by participants as GBV; and thus, it is worth exploring the ways covert GBV manifests in SFD and how TVIPA may differentiate and address gendered forms of oppression and violence. Put differently, how might SFD programs interrogate covert forms of GBV? How does TVIPA address forms of covert GBV in SFD? How might teaching boys and men about covert forms of GBV through SFD prevent them from perpetrating GBV? These are relevant questions for scholars, practitioners, and organizations involved in SFD considering the impact it may have on the health and well-being of people at a heightened risk of experiencing GBV.

4.3.2 Evaluating the Use of TVIPA in SFD

In turn, this study responded to LeCrom et al.’s (2019, p. 65) process-based inquiry for future SFD research: “Are there approaches to SFD program establishment that lead to strong sustainability?” This research explored the ways in which tenets of TVI approaches are used in SFD, however, it did not evaluate the use of TVIPA in SFD, and in addition, MLSE LP was not intentionally designed to centre tenets of TVI in their SFD programming. A broader more in-depth study is thus needed that evaluates the implementation of TVIPA as an approach to health-focused SFD programs. In fact, an exploration of SFD programs that centres TVIPA would

provide insight into how TVIC principles are utilized and enacted in SFD programs, rather than solely providing insight on how SFD programs *might* incorporate TVIC principles and thus, TVIPA. Future research that critically examines how SFD organizations may design their programming around a TVI approach would therefore be beneficial to support program providers and users experiencing trauma and/or violence.

4.3.3 Exploring Gender Fluid Approaches to the Delivery of TVIPA and SFD

This study explored the use of TVI approaches in SFD programs in supporting the challenges of women, girls, and gender diverse people. Although this research searched for ways in which TVISFD may support these groups, the gender dimension of TVIPA and SFD has largely centred categorical gender comparisons between men and women. This upholds the Western gender binary system that assumes men and women are fixed categories of gender and excludes gender identities that fall within or outside of these margins of gender, including (but not limited to) Two-Spirit, non-binary, gender fluid, and transgender individuals. Therefore, the Western gender binary system taken up by TVIPA and SFD programs requires further interrogation and investigation on how it may impede on the health and social benefits of these programs for gender diverse people. Additionally, researchers might consider exploring the use of gender fluid approaches to the delivery of physical activity and SFD programs and its feasibility in supporting gender and health equitable outcomes in diverse populations.

4.4 Challenges and Limitations

Studies examining the meaning of community-university partnerships in community-based participatory research have noted how tensions remain around negotiating university-community relations (Flicker, 2008). Throughout this research project, there were several challenges that I confronted as I carried out community-based FPAR and worked as an intern

within the organization. In what follows, I outline these challenges and state limitations of this study.

The two most prevalent challenges I experienced during field work included: navigating community-based FPAR with stakeholders; and fostering relationships with gender diverse youth. A PAR approach suggests that local communities ought to be full partners in the processes of social change and knowledge creation (Flicker, et al., 2008). Considering this, it was important to prioritize the knowledge of all community stakeholders involved, including both hourly youth workers, participants, full-time staff, and the community advisory board. This was particularly challenging because of the diverse range of stakeholders and their different roles in the organization. In addition to having different responsibilities, stakeholders were not all in the same place at any given time. For instance, most full-time staff spent their time on the upper level (where the offices were located) overseeing the court and programming, whereas hourly youth workers spent their time on the ground level (where the court was located) delivering programs and supporting youth and were not typically permitted on the upper level. Since I was working as a volunteer in my interning role, I spent most of my time on the court with hourly youth workers and participants. Thus, while it is still possible that all stakeholders involved in the research benefited (e.g., through voicing their experiences and recommendations), such benefits were not necessarily equitably spread (Flicker, 2008). This could be addressed in the future by formally involving all research participants in the data analysis and results process (and compensating them appropriately). Since data analysis occurred iteratively, I would have informal conversations in-person and through text messages about interim findings with a few research participants that I had gotten close with (Joanne, Nicole, Allie, and Jessica). However, I did not have the opportunity to speak with each research participant about data analysis and

results during my time at MLSE LP. Formally organizing workshops for all research participants to take part in the data analysis and results process would help equitably spread the benefits of community-based research.

The second challenge I faced was trying to foster relationships with gender diverse youth and recruit members for my study. As mentioned in my reflexivity and results chapters, there was a notable lack of gender non-conforming youth. Although there were a couple gender diverse youth under the age of 16, I hadn't met any gender diverse youth members that were 16 years old or older, or any gender diverse youth workers and full-time staff members. The absence of gender diverse youth could be due to a heteronormative framework that the majority of SFD research imparts, preventing nuanced understandings of gender and sexuality within programming (Carney & Chawansky, 2016). Moreover, and as stated in my methodology chapter, I was not able to formally recruit any gender diverse youth in my study.

There were also other difficulties I had in relation to my own personal experience doing research, including theoretical challenges (e.g., exploring a strengths-based approach which focuses on positive attributes while using intersectional feminist theory which is inherently critical), personal challenges (e.g., struggling with the pandemic and my own experiences of trauma), that I navigated throughout the research project. In addition to these challenges, there were some limitations of this study that may have influenced this research.

The first limitation of this study was that I, a white woman who grew up in the suburbs, was carrying out research on youth with racialized identities living in the city. I have rarely been excluded by my race or social class, and thus have a very different experience of marginalization than the youth I was doing research with. For instance, my participants experienced marginalization from racism and sexism, whereas I experienced marginalization from sexism and

had a complex understanding of how gender discrimination and homophobia affected peoples' lives. This relates to literature on FPAR wherein there were multiple knowledges amongst us that grew even more powerful when explored (Fine & Torre, 2019). In addition, research on GBV often centres white middle-class women (like me) and excludes women experiencing intersecting oppressions. Thus, despite interning at the organization, I was still a partial outsider. In turn, my experience as a partial outsider may have limited the extent of knowledge I was able to gather while in the field.

The second limitation that may have influenced the outcome of this research was the lack of gender and sexual diversity within my participant sample. As previously mentioned, gender diverse people are often "othered" in sporting environments and their experiences are often excluded in academic research. Thus, what may have been deemed a safe space for the participants that took part in this study may not reflect the experiences of gender and sexually diverse youth. I suggest future SFD research prioritize engaging with queer theory (Ferreira Gomes et al., in press), as queer theory examines the ways in which dominant heteronormative discourses have shaped heterosexual relations as the norm (Spargo, 1999). Thus, queer theory may explain how mainstream heteronormative discourses permeate SFD spaces (Ferreira Gomes et al., in press). In the future, I may adopt queer theologies and methodologies to help capture the experiences of gender diverse people and interrogate hegemonic heteronormativity in SFD spaces.

4.5 Recommendations for MLSE LaunchPad and other SFD Organizations:

Inspired by critical feminist research, PAR aims to change power relations in the research process stimulate transformative action (Schurr & Segebert, 2012). Herein, it is critical that I reflect on actionable items MLSE LP and other SFD organizations may engage with in the

future. This is also important when adopting a community-based approach—which stresses the importance of addressing future health and social issues (Flicker, 2008). In short, with an awareness of intersectionality and intersectional feminist lenses, we can better acknowledge group differences and negotiate how these differences will find expression (Crenshaw, 1991). As such, my theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study demand that this research leads to recommendations in advancing actionable change. Below I outline a number of recommendations for MLSE LP focused on practical, structural, and procedural levels.

- “We need staff training on how to delegate emotions on and off the court.” (Emily)
Implement training for youth workers that focuses on how to delegate their emotions and navigate conversations around gender, sex, and sexuality, as well as sexual and reproductive health. This could include practical techniques on how to prevent and reduce chances of re-traumatization amongst youth members. Ensure this training is designed with the intent of addressing the needs of community members with intersectional social identities and the interlocking effects of racism, sexism, and GBV.
- Include local community members representing diverse social identities in the creation, development, and implementation of SFD programming, planning, and policy. Honour community members voices in how TVIPA approaches to SFD program delivery might be implemented, and include their knowledge in how to implement TVIPA, achieve development purposes, and protect vulnerable community members. Building on the strengths of community members will bolster a strengths-based and capacity-building approach that supports client coping and resilience.
- Offer free counselling support to staff and youth members that can be accessed outside of the facility. Of course, there are moments where youth members experiencing trauma and

violence need immediate talk support, wherein having counselling support in the building is helpful. However, findings illustrated that youth may be deterred from returning to the space once they were recommended to therapy within the space. Responding to this, it may be wise to offer youth free virtual counselling support or offer counselling support that is close in proximity but is not directly located in the SFD facility.

- Include 2SLGBTQ+ representation in the space. This includes having staff members from diverse social identities and identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and extends to incorporating visual 2SLGBTQ+ representation in the space, including (but not limited to) the pride and transgender flags, 2SLGBTQ+ posters and events, and SFD programs tailored to the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ community members. MLSE LP reflects the heteronormative nature of SFD organizations wherein gender non-conforming and gender diverse individuals are excluded. Coupled with this, 2SLGBTQ+ persons experience increased rates of GBV than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Jaffray, 2020). In short, it is clear that MLSE LP and SFD organizations at large must respond to the pervasive and violent nature of heterosexism and heteronormativity.
- Discuss the ways in which language is used and deployed in SFD programs and consider adopting inclusive and invitational language throughout programs with full-time staff, youth workers, and community members. There is growing recognition in legislation that gender and sexual identities exist along a continuum (Revell & Vapnek, 2020). On the micro level, transgender individual's discrimination in sport can be affected by the personal traits of other participants, bystanders, and spectators (Braumüller, 2020). TVIPA in SFD must then be cognizant of gender and sexual diversity and inclusivity (with consideration given to additional discrimination and oppression) in its approach to

adequately support women, girls, and gender diverse people. Thus, reversing exclusionary language in SFD and physical activity spaces helps account for and include persons who identify as gender diverse and other 2SLGBTQ+ people. The deleterious effects of gendered language on women and non-binary people are staggering (Revell & Vapnek, 2020), making it more crucial than ever to have language reflect the diverseness of gender identity.

4.6 ‘You Need to Make Sure Your Space is Representative of What You Want to Support’:

Concluding Remarks

This research was – in part – developed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its traumatic effects, including increased GBV rates, and a growing movement to use TVI approaches to healthcare (TVIC; Wathen & Varcoe, 2021) and physical activity (TVIPA; Darroch et al., 2018). Upon learning that GBV prevention often centres the lives of women and girls in TVIPA and SFD, I became interested in exploring how the use of TVIPA in and through SFD might support—in addition to women and girls—gender diverse people. The title of this section relates to Joanne’s quotation about how she imagined SFD programs could be more gender inclusive, saying “you need to make sure that your space is representative of what you want to support, and also, that your management team is also supportive and representative of what you want to support.”

My findings shed light on how SFD programs and MLSE LP might indeed incorporate aspects of TVIPA in their programs (such as offering free programming, informal talk support, etc.) which help in supporting women experiencing marginalizing circumstances, but where does this leave youth who choose not to conform to their assigned gender? Where does this leave youth who choose not to conform to any gender, for that matter? Unfortunately, I don’t have a

neat or simple answer for this pertinent question. Instead, I can only reflect on my interactions with gender diverse people in the space, which as previously stated, was minimal. I reflect on my friendship with Jesse, how I watched him when he went to the girl's bathroom seemingly uncomfortable, knowing he didn't feel like he belonged. My different approach as a volunteer within MLSE LP and my understanding of the marginalization of the 2SLGBTQ+ community was recognized by Jesse and made him feel comfortable. As Joanne, Allie, Nori, Andy, and many other women I interviewed shared with me (n=10), representation was important in maintaining safety and support for youth members, including gender diverse people and women and girls.

This study is unique in that the utility of TVIPA in SFD programming has not been explored until now. Coming to understand the different ways TVIPA is manifested in SFD helped me to interpret the ways in which these approaches deviate and intersect. Using community-based FPAR gave immense meaning to this work, as I was not just given the typical role as a researcher to produce my own knowledge, but I worked diligently to prioritize the knowledge of the community and attempted to combine these ways of knowing with my own understanding of the research. Using community-based FPAR, I was committed to sharing the knowledge produced by my participants in our interviews and informal conversations and leverage it in an attempt to produce social change for their community. Though the social impact of this research may not be fully realized, the community-based nature of this work allowed for the development of empathic relationships with participants, relationships that have personally impacted me greatly and will undoubtedly impact my future research to come.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Stakeholder (MLSE LaunchPad Staff) Interview Guide

1. Who are the participants you have been working with before COVID-19 and this last year?
2. How has Launchpad programming adapted to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions?

3. What are some benefits and challenges you face through offering SFD programs?
4. How does SFD programming provide a safe space for participants to be physically active?
5. What type of training is staff given before working with marginalized communities?
6. How does the organization offer gender-inclusive programming?
 - a. Is this programming supported for gender non-binary participants?
 - b. How is this programming supportive of girls and women? LGBTQIA2S+?
7. How do the programs focus on progress in sport instead of the typical performative focus on winning?
8. How are the root causes of trauma addressed through the programs? How are the root causes of violence addressed through the programs?
9. How has Launchpad used sports programming in a way that's attentive to the needs of participants who may have experienced gender-based violence (Ie. Domestic or sexual violence)?
10. How do the programs provide support for participants experiencing sexual and domestic violence, or other forms of gender-based violence?
11. How can sport for development programs be created to prevent possible re-traumatization of participants?
12. How do you feel LaunchPad programs impact the social health outcomes of participants? (Probe: Ie. Their social support networks, social environment, personal health practices, life skills, education, literacy, employment?)
13. If you were to give advice to another organization just beginning to run sport for development programs in a more gender inclusive way, what would you tell them? Why? Any other advice you would give?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to add or that we missed?

Appendix B: Sample MLSE Launchpad Program Participant Interview Guide

1. When did you first join Launchpad's SFD Program? Are you the only member of your household participating?
2. How has your experience been using Launchpad's in-person programs? (Note: if involved prior to COVID-19 pandemic)
3. Have pandemic related restrictions impacted your access to Launchpad programming?

4. Did you have any issues accessing Launchpad's programs?
 - a. Was wifi/internet connection ever an issue?
5. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your experience with the Coach Education Program?
6. How have the programs impacted your overall health (probe: has it helped your ability or not to cope with the pandemic?)
7. Has the programming provided you with any social support? (Probe: have you formed any relationships with peers/staff? How so?)
8. Have you felt any physical or mental benefits, or any physical or mental challenges, from participating in programming?
9. In your opinion, do you think the Coach Education Program can be part of the healing process for persons who have experienced trauma? *Probes*: If so, in what ways? What role does sport play in this process (if at all)? If not, why not?
10. How do you think the Coach Education Program, if at all, addresses the root causes of systemic violence and other inequalities? *Probes*: If so, how? If not, why not?
11. How does the program address gendered forms of violence and other gendered biases?
 - a. In your opinion, is gender non-binary participation supported? *Probes*: If so, how? If not, why not?
12. Does participating in the Coach Education Program help to relieve stress?
 - a. Has the program helped you cope with past traumatic events? *Probes*: If so how? If not, why not?
13. In what ways, if at all, do you think the Coach Education Program could be improved? (Probe: how should it be organized?)
14. Is there anything that would make sports programming more welcoming or appropriate for you?
15. Is there anything else that you would like to add or that we missed?

Appendix C: MLSE LaunchPad Staff Interview Guide (After Revisions)

Thank you so much for meeting to speak with me today. I'm going to start by asking you some questions about LaunchPad and the role you play in delivering SFD programs. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, we can skip over them and at any point if you want to stop the interview, let me know and I will stop the recording.

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your role at this organization? (**Probes:** how does your role relate to sport for development/sport and social development/sport gender, and development)?
2. What is involved in your day-to-day job at LaunchPad?

3. What are some benefits you experience from delivering SFD programs? What are some challenges you face delivering SFD programs?
4. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your experience delivering LaunchPads programs?
5. How does LaunchPad provide a safe space for participants to be physically active?
6. Are participants given opportunities by the staff to choose how and in what capacity they want to participate in SFD?
7. Can you explain to me what the word of the month is? Are there any conversations about gender and sexuality had with the kids?
8. How does the organization offer gender-inclusive programming?
 - a. Is this programming supported for gender non-binary participants?
 - b. How is this programming supportive of girls and women? LGBTQIA2S+?
9. What type of training is staff given before working with marginalized communities?
10. How do you feel the programs focus on progress in sport instead of the typical performative focus on winning?
11. Social determinants of health include things like social support networks, education and literature, and healthy child development.
 - a. How do you feel LaunchPads SFD programs impact the social health outcomes of participants? (Probe: Ie. How has it impacted their social support networks, social environment, personal health practices, life skills, education, literacy, employment?)

The next few questions I am going to ask are specific to how LaunchPad's programming is trauma and violence informed. Just a reminder you don't need to respond to these questions if you don't want to.

Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, natural disaster, rape, and other forms of violence. Sometimes people can develop post-traumatic stress without any explicit memory of the trauma.

1. How, if at all, do you think LaunchPad's programs provide support for participants experiencing trauma?

GBV is defined as violence that is inflicted on a person due to their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender.

2. How, if at all, do you think LaunchPad's programs provide support for participants experiencing sexual and domestic violence, or other forms of gender-based violence?

3. In your opinion, do you think LaunchPad's programming can be part of the healing process for persons who have experienced trauma? *Probes:* What role does sport play in this process (if at all)? If not, why not?
4. If you were to give advice to another organization just beginning to run sport for development programs in a more gender inclusive way, what would you tell them? Why? Any other advice you would give?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to add or that we missed?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I will follow up in a couple of weeks by sending you a transcript of our discussion today. I encourage you to review it to assure that you feel it accurately reflects that nature of our conversation today. Please feel free to reach out at any time if you have questions or further thoughts you'd like to share. Thank you again!

Appendix D: Sample MLSE Launchpad Program Participant Interview Guide (After Revisions)

Thank you so much for meeting to speak with me today. I'm going to start by asking you some questions about LaunchPad and your experience in LaunchPad's programs. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, we can skip over them and at any point if you want to stop the interview, let me know and I will stop the recording.

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and why you first started attending LaunchPad's programs?
2. When did you first join Launchpad's Programs? Are you the only member of your household participating?

3. How has your experience been using Launchpad's in-person programs?
4. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your experience using LaunchPads programs?
5. Has the programming provided you with any social support? (Probe: have you formed any relationships with peers/staff? How so?)
6. Have you felt any physical or mental benefits, or any physical or mental challenges, from participating in programming?
7. Are there any other benefits you have experienced from participating in LaunchPads programs?
8. Are there any challenges you have face participating in LaunchPads programs?
9. How have the programs impacted your overall health (probe: has it helped your ability or not to cope with the pandemic?)
10. Is there anything that would make LaunchPads programming more welcoming or appropriate for you?
11. In what ways, if at all, do you think LaunchPad's programming could be improved? (Probe: how should it be organized?)
12. Do you feel LaunchPad's programming is gender-inclusive? Why? Why not?
 - b. In your opinion, is programming supported for gender non-binary participants?
 - a. *Probes:* If so, how? If not, why not?
 - c. In your opinion, is programming supported for LGBTQIA2S+ participants? If not, why not?

The next few questions I am going to ask are specific to how LaunchPad's programming is trauma and violence informed. Just a reminder you don't need to respond to these questions if you don't want to.

Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, natural disaster, rape, and other forms of violence. Sometimes people can develop post-traumatic stress without any explicit memory of the trauma.

12. How, if at all, do you think LaunchPad's programs provide support for participants experiencing trauma?

Gender-based violence is defined as violence that is inflicted upon a person or persons due to their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender.

13. How, if at all, do you think LaunchPad's programs provide support for participants experiencing sexual and domestic violence, or other forms of gender-based violence?
14. Does participating in LaunchPad's programming help to relieve stress?
- a. Has the program helped you cope with past traumatic events? Probes: If so how? If not, why not?
13. In your opinion, do you think LaunchPad's programming can be part of the healing process for persons who have experienced trauma? *Probes:* What role does sport play in this process (if at all)? If not, why not?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to add or that we missed?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I will follow up in a couple of weeks by sending you a transcript of our discussion today. I encourage you to review it to assure that you feel it accurately reflects that nature of our conversation today. Please feel free to reach out at any time if you have questions or further thoughts you'd like to share. Thank you again!

Appendix E: Standard Demographic Data Collection

1. In what year were you born?

2. What gender do you identify as?

☐	Boy/man
☐	Girl/woman
☐	Non-binary
☐	Other, please specify:
☐	Prefer not to answer

3. How would you define your sexuality?

☐	Heterosexual/straight
☐	gay or lesbian
☐	bisexual
☐	pansexual
☐	Other, please specify:
☐	Prefer not to answer

4. What is your race/ethnicity? The bracketed portions are optional.

☐	Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, or African-Canadian descent)
☐	East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)
☐	Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, or Metis)
☐	Latinx (Latina American or Hispanic Descent)
☐	Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, or West Asian descent e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, etc.)
☐	South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.)
☐	Southeast Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, etc.)
☐	White (European descent)
☐	Mixed Race
☐	Other, please specify:
☐	Prefer not to answer

5. What is your household income?

☐	Under \$20,000
☐	Between \$20,000 and \$30,000
☐	Between \$30,000 and \$50,000
☐	Between \$50,000 and \$70,000
☐	Between \$70,000 and \$95,000
☐	Over \$95,000

☐	Over \$150,000
☐	Prefer not to answer

Geographical location of residence

-Assessed via postal code: _____

Appendix F: SFD Participant Informed Consent Template

Date:

Study Name: Exploring the Utility of Virtual Trauma-and Violence-Informed Sport for Development (TVISFD) Programs with Maple Leaf Sport and Entertainment's LaunchPad in Moss Park, Toronto: A community-based participatory approach

Researchers:

Principal Investigator	Co-Researcher	Co-Researcher	Student Researcher	Student Researcher
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Purpose of the Research: We are doing a research project about the use of trauma-and violence-informed sport for development (TVISFD) to support women and girls who experience(d) GBV through community-based participatory projects and research in Moss Park, Toronto by designing, developing, pilot-testing, and evaluating novel virtual resources and intervention modules. The reasons we are doing this project is to understand the connections between TVI and SFD and how organizations, such as Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Launchpad (MLSE LP), may develop virtual programming and resources that are appropriate to work with and support women and girls living in marginalizing circumstances. Overall, the information for this study (funded by an E-Alliance Seed Research Grant) will be used to co-develop virtual TVISFD programming, modules, and toolkits for sport for development (SFD) stakeholders, including program participants, SFD organizational staff, and community members in Moss Park. We can also learn about how TVISFD approaches might be improved and help foster stronger relationships between partners and communities. The information gathered will be used in various publications and to improve SFD programming.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: You are invited to participate in this study because you are a sport for development participant in MLSE LP's coach development program. Your participation will consist of one semi-structured interview (via Zoom depending on COVID-19 pandemic guidelines or in person at MLSE LP) that will last approximately 1 to 2 hours. We also ask for your participation in taking photographs on your own time that represents how the SFD programs can help and/or hinder gender equity. The interview questions will mainly include questions in regard to creating, engaging, and accessing virtual SFD programs and resources. During the focus group, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, which takes approximately 10 minutes. We will also ask that you participate in participatory mapping using Geographic Information Systems, whereby you will be provided with a digital camera to take photographs, sketch maps, and create videos in relation to SFD, physical activity, and your environment. The photos and videos will be analyzed to examine community profiles, weather, crime patterns, and trends with communities (e.g., proximity of park/playgrounds). Time commitment for participatory mapping is dependent on how much time you would like to dedicate to the project, but we do not see the time commitment exceeding 1-2 hours. You will be provided a \$25 honourarium for your participation in the study.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Your participation in this study will include sharing your thoughts and experiences and contributing to the development of virtual TVISFD training modules for designing curriculum and virtual resources for SFD participants, staff, and communities, and to seek to reduce GBV among Moss Park Youth and at MLSE LP, as well as for similar focused organizations in SFD.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers, study staff, or organization, and the nature of your relationship with York University or MLSE LP either now, or in the future. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality: Unless you choose otherwise all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. All data, including handwritten notes, video, photos, and audio tapes, is strictly confidential. No records which identify you by name or initials will be allowed to leave the Investigators' offices. A code number will be used to identify you. The information will be stored in a locked file cabinet and computer files will be password protected, and only research staff/research team members will have access to this information. The data will be stored for 5 years after the completion of the study, and then destroyed by deleting all computer files and shredding all paper data. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst either by telephone at 416-557-1429, or by e-mail (lhayhurs@yorku.ca). This research has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-

Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I (*fill in your name here*), consent to participate in the study, *Exploring the Utility of Virtual Trauma-and Violence-Informed Sport for Development (TVISFD) Programs with Maple Leaf Sport and Entertainment's LaunchPad in Moss Park, Toronto: A community-based participatory approach*, conducted by Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____

Signature _____
Principal Investigator

Date _____

Additional consent (where applicable)

1. Audio recording

☐ I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

Signature _____
Participant Name:

Date _____

I _____ consent to the use of images of me (including photographs, video, and other moving images) my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles [] Yes [] No

In print, digital and slide form [] Yes [] No

In academic presentations [] Yes [] No

In media [] Yes [] No

In thesis materials [] Yes [] No

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____

Signature _____
Principal Investigator

Date _____

☐ Check this box if you would like to receive a summary of the study findings (and please print your contact information in the space below).

If you do not check any of these boxes, you can still participate in the current study. You can also check these boxes off but decide in the future that you do not want to participate.

E-mail Address (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone # (or where we can leave a message): _____

Appendix G: MLSE LP Staff & Community Member Informed Consent Form Template

Date:

Study Name: Exploring the Utility of Virtual Trauma-and Violence-Informed Sport for Development (TVISFD) Programs with Maple Leaf Sport and Entertainment's LaunchPad in Moss Park, Toronto: A community-based participatory approach

Researchers:

Principal Investigator	Co-Researcher	Co-Researcher	Student Researcher	Student Researcher
Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst Assistant Professor School of Kinesiology and Health Science York University 4700 Keele St. Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3 email: lhayhurs@yorku.ca	Dr. Francine Darroch Assistant Professor Department of Health Sciences Carleton University 1125 Colonel By Dr, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 5B6 email: francine.darroch@carleton.ca	Marika Warner Director of Research and Evaluation Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Launchpad 15 York St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada email: Marika.Warner@mlselaunchpad.org	Julia Ferreira Gomes Graduate Student School of Kinesiology and Health Science York University 4700 Keele St. Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3 email: jfgomes@yorku.ca	Raghdah Zakariya Undergraduate Student School of Kinesiology and Health Science York University 4700 Keele St. Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3 email: raghdahz@my.yorku.ca

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What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: You are invited to participate in this study because you are a staff member of MLSE LP or a Moss Park community member. Your participation will consist of one semi-structured interview (via Zoom, telephone call, or in person depending on COVID-19 pandemic guidelines) that will last approximately 1 to 2 hours. The interview questions will mainly concern the implementation of TVISFD to inform in-person programming and content for virtual resources. After the interview, we will transcribe the interview and then email it or mail it to you for you to review and to edit as you deem necessary. The review can take about 30-60 minutes. Transcripts that are not reviewed within two weeks will be deemed as acceptable and will be used in the study. During or prior to the interview, we will ask that you complete a questionnaire, which takes approximately 10 minutes. You will be provided a \$25 honourarium for your participation in the study.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Your participation in this study will include sharing your thoughts and experiences and contributing to the development of virtual TVISFD training modules for designing curriculum and virtual resources for SFD participants, staff, and communities, and to seek to reduce GBV among Moss Park Youth and at MLSE LP, as well as for similar focused organizations in SFD.

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Participant

Date _____

Signature _____
Principal Investigator

Date _____

Additional consent (where applicable)

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☐ I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

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Telephone # (or where we can leave a message): _____