

Youth-Serving Organizations' Inclusivity of

LGBTQ Newcomers in Canada – A Content Analysis

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For LGBTQ newcomer youth lacking support at home and in school, youth-serving organizations provide various services and socialization that can effectively address their challenges. In a two-stage content analysis, this study explored LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity in 39 youth-serving organizations in Toronto and Vancouver, as well as programs and services offered to this subpopulation specifically. Stage 1 findings demonstrate that few organizations displayed inclusion of, and supports for, LGBTQ newcomers. Stage 2 findings show that programs and services offered to this subpopulation can be categorized into four themes: cultural and linguistic sensitivity, skills development & education, socialization & community connections, and health & well-being. Recommendations for best practices are discussed.

Keywords: LGBT, newcomer, youth, mental health, youth organizations, inclusivity

Word Count: 6192

Introduction

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

In Canada, newcomers are typically defined as immigrants or refugees who have been in the country less than five years (Statistics Canada, 2018b). Newcomer is a blanket term lumping these two groups, though their experiences may vary significantly; differences will be highlighted. The term *LGBTQ* refers to a subpopulation of individuals who identify as either

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (the latter an umbrella term for identities that are non-heterosexual or non-cisgender). For this study, *LGBTQ* is not shorthand for more encompassing acronyms such as *LGBTTIQQ2SA*, which includes questioning, 2-spirited (an Indigenous North American term), and ally identities.

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

In many countries, identifying as LGBTQ is stigmatized or criminal. LGBTQ “propaganda” is prohibited in 17 nations, 40 legally protect individuals that assault or murder LGBTQ persons because of their identity, and homosexuality (or same-sex intercourse) can be punishable by death in 13 countries (Fenton, 2016). LGBTQ individuals in these regions may escape such persecution through migration (Kahn et al., 2018). While Canada may appear to be a haven for LGBTQ newcomers – it was the first country to accept refugee claims based on sexual orientation related persecution in 1991 – LGBTQ individuals continue to face discrimination and marginalization upon their arrival in Canada (Kahn et al. 2017).

In addition to xenophobia and challenges associated with settlement, LGBTQ newcomer youth experience more extreme bullying at school and face greater hostility and rejection within their family and culture compared to their Canadian-born peers (Daley et al. 2008). Transgender

newcomer youth, especially transgender females (male to female), are at the greatest risk of victimization compared to gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals (Daley et al., 2008). These experiences can negatively impact their mental health and identity development, creating barriers to a healthy and prosperous life in their new home.

While this subpopulation is diverse, they share a need for – and benefit from – supports beyond the household and school environment (Wilber et al., 2006). Youth-serving organizations can fill the support gap; they can be found both online and in the community. These organizations provide a range of services, including (but not limited to) educational and career programs, sports and outdoor activities, music and cooking classes, community involvement opportunities, and physical or mental health supports such as clinics and counseling. They may be charitable, for-profit, religion oriented, secular, neighborhood specific, or international. These organizations can significantly impact the skills, attitudes, and experiences of youth; those involved are more likely to succeed academically and report a greater sense of personal value, agency, and hopefulness (McLaughlin, 2000). Settlement organizations can provide much of the same services for youth, and LGBTQ newcomer youth are likely to encounter them first; youth-oriented settlement organizations are included in this study.

Canadian youth-serving organizations ought to demonstrate inclusivity and offer focused services for LGBTQ newcomer youth as this subpopulation comprises a significant portion of Canada's immigrants and refugees, especially in larger cities considered popular settlement destinations. Statistics Canada reports that in 2011, 34% of recent newcomers were under the age of 24 – the median age was 32 (2011). In both Toronto and Vancouver, 45% of immigrants were under the age of 25 upon arrival (Statistics Canada, 2016a; Statistics Canada, 2016b). Statistics Canada (2018a) also reports that between 4-10% of Canadian youth identify as either gay,

lesbian, or bisexual – the percentage may be greater for newcomers since sexual orientation or gender identity related persecution motivates or necessitates migration (Kahn et al., 2018).

Youth-serving organizations that fail to represent youth as a diverse group ignore many lived experiences and knowledges. This contributes to a narrative that the needs and experiences of LGBTQ newcomer youth are similar to other youth or irrelevant, perpetuating the oppression and marginalization these youth face daily. Identifying where improvements can be made will aid organizations in the creation and implementation of inclusive policies, allowing them to reach and support this population more effectively.

This study gauges LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity in youth-serving organizations through a content analysis of the organizations' websites. Websites are important tools for this population as they seek help for their challenges (McDermott, 2014). The Internet can serve as a non-judgmental, anonymous, and comfortable space for finding supports; youth are increasingly filling gaps in offline knowledge and with online information (Rickwood et al., 2007). Since the Internet is a gateway to supports, organizations ought to display inclusivity online.

A key concept incorporated into this analysis is *intersectionality*, which will help us explore whether and to what degree these organizations understand youth as a diverse group. Intersectionality recognizes the unique experiences of overlapping identities – it does not adhere to an additive approach which sums the independent experiences of collective identities (e.g. sexuality + immigration status + age). It also holds that “one-size-fits-all” approaches cannot address the complex inequalities certain populations face; such approaches fail to reflect and effectively address lived realities (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011).

Methods

A content analysis of Toronto and Vancouver youth-serving organization websites was conducted in April and May of 2019 to gauge how inclusive these organizations are towards LGBTQ newcomer youth. The analysis is divided into two research questions; first, how do youth-serving organizations display inclusion of LGBTQ newcomers on their websites? Second, what programs and services are offered specifically to LGBTQ newcomer youth? This two-stage content analysis was inspired and informed by a Giwa & Chaze (2018) study which examined settlement organization websites and their inclusiveness toward LGBTQ newcomers in Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The first question was answered through 8 sub-questions adapted and expanded from the Giwa & Chaze (2018) study. They are as follows:

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

For the second research question, programs and services offered specifically to LGBTQ newcomer youth were identified in the sample, described, and categorized thematically. Literature is referenced to support or critique the efficacy of these services/resources.

This study followed Giwa & Chaze (2018) in using a deductive content analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008) to answer these questions. This investigation was concerned with content youth typically encounter while navigating a website so annual reports and other organizational publications were excluded. For each website, all webpages were independently analyzed; data coding was repeated twice to ensure intra-rater reliability. Memoing was preformed throughout the analysis to illuminate findings and inform the discussion.

Though following similar methods, this study differs from Giwa & Chaze (2018) by focusing on LGBTQ newcomer *youth* and *youth*-serving organizations under the assumption that the needs and experiences of youth are distinct and such organizations may provide more appropriate resources. Also, youth may not be continually exposed to settlement organizations – other than school, young LGBTQ newcomers may engage more with youth-serving organizations following their settlement. There was some overlap; immigrant-serving agencies were included in this study if they largely focused on youth, while some of the organizations in Giwa & Chaze (2018) study were specific to youth. However, the core purposes of the organizations in both studies are largely distinct and thus worth distinguishing.

While Giwa & Chaze (2018) considered two Canadian provinces, this study surveys two Canadian cities. Websites in this analysis belonged to organizations based either in Toronto or Vancouver – these large Canadian cities were selected as they are popular settlement destinations with the greatest number of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2017). Considering their size and diverse populations, the websites of organizations in these cities should be relatively inclusive in

the Canadian context – a poor showing of inclusiveness in this study would suggest organizations lack inclusivity nationwide. Alternatively, if these cities demonstrate significant inclusivity, they can serve as a benchmark for organizations across the country.

Youth-serving organizations in Toronto were selected through the city’s website on the [“Find Youth Services”](#) page on April 25 and 26, 2019 (City of Toronto). A total of 1036 organizations were identified, viewable in either map or list form. Each listing included contact information, eligibility, and languages offered. Selecting a sample from such an expansive list required robust inclusion/exclusion criteria. Categorized by type, organizations were filtered out if they did not serve our target subpopulation, such as those aiding Indigenous youth. Those providing general, population non-specific services (e.g. food banks, tax services, dentists, etc.) were also excluded, along with youth programs and services offered by the government (either directly or through schools, hospitals, etc.). This process reduced the total to 832.

To refine the list further, additional criteria was applied. First, organizations must have had a functional website as this study is interested in their online presence. While an organization can serve or operate in other cities, provinces, or countries, they needed to have a physical presence or listed address in Toronto. They must also cater to people – councils or groups representing other agencies were omitted. Duplicates were also excluded at this stage – some organizations had multiple listings for different programs using the same URL. This reduced the list to 241.

Toronto’s list of organizations considered “youth serving” is expansive as they link to any organization youths can access, rather than those that serve youth primarily. Thus, to further refine the list, only organizations that devoted a significant focus on youth were included – those that did not refer to youth in the description or eligibility section were removed. This resulted in

a total of 101 Toronto organizations applicable to the research questions. Random number generation was used to select 25% of the list for a sample of 25 Toronto youth-serving organizations.

For Vancouver, the sample was also drawn from an official city website catering specifically to youth; this was done on May 4, 2019. Under the “[Vancouver Youth Organizations & Services](#)” section of the website, 217 organizations and programs were listed along with a description and website link (City of Vancouver). The same inclusion/exclusion criteria used for Toronto was applied, producing a list of 55 organizations. Unlike the City of Toronto’s website, all organizations listed were geared specifically toward youth, though 32% of otherwise applicable organizations were excluded as website links were either broken or incorrect. Random number generation was again used to select 25% of the list which resulted in a sample of 14 Vancouver youth-serving organizations.

While LGBTQ newcomer youth can use a search engine (e.g. Google) to find organizations that are newcomer and/or LGBTQ focused, this may not be appropriate for everyone in this subpopulation. For example, some youth may avoid researching LGBTQ organizations to conceal their identity from family, such organizations may not provide the specific services they are primarily seeking, or the organization may have been selected by their parents. Thus, this study seeks to understand LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity on youth-serving organization websites across the board; a random sample selected from our cities’ comprehensive online directories should achieve this.

Altogether, this stage of the investigation examines 39 websites – their primary focuses are broken down in Table 1. The decision to analyze 25% of 156 identified websites was due to resource and time constraints, though Giwa & Chaze (2018) also used random number

generation to select one-third of identified websites for similar sample size of 34. Their justification was not stated.

Table 1. Primary focus of youth-serving organizations in sample

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

Findings

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

Five of the 39 websites (13%) had the option to view its content in languages other than English or French (Canada's official languages). This was largely achieved through imbedded third-party applications, such as the Google Translate tool, though a few provided their own translations.

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

Languages options varied for the four Toronto websites that included them (16%). Two were exhaustive, one of which had 103 languages available through the Google Translate tool. One was an organization primarily serving the Chinese community and only had Chinese as an option. Another, which serves the whole city, had a choice of Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Sri Lankan, and Somalian; the two most spoken unofficial languages – Chinese and Tagalog – were not included.

Since Toronto and Vancouver are popular settlement destinations, many speak an unofficial language. In the Toronto census metropolitan area, about 1.8 million predominantly speak an immigrant language at home (33%); in Vancouver, roughly 712,000 (31%) do so (Statistics Canada, 2016a; Statistics Canada, 2016b). Additionally, about 130,000 people in Toronto (1 in 20) cannot converse in either official language (Wilson et al., 2018). Thus, there is a sizable number of people that would find English- or French-only websites challenging to navigate. With only 13% of websites offering translation, largely to just a few languages, linguistic minorities face a barrier while seeking supports online.

LGBTQ-friendly images appeared on eight of the websites (21%; Toronto = 24%, Vancouver = 14%), which included the positive space triangle (a rainbow symbol signifying LGBTQ inclusiveness) and photographs of people holding pride flags or positive LGBTQ messages. In some instances, programs serving LGBTQ persons had logos incorporating inclusive symbols (e.g. a circle of colorful joining hands). It is noted that LGBTQ-friendly images may not resonate with all cultures, though cultural globalization and widespread Internet use among youth make it likely these symbols and their meanings are recognizable.

While the percentage of websites containing LGBTQ-friendly images in both cities was greater than the percentage of LGBTQ people in Canada, this should not serve as a success

benchmark. LGBTQ persons still face considerable marginalization and discrimination in Canada, including larger cities such as Toronto and Vancouver (Kahn et al. 2017). Such images are easy to incorporate on a website, convey support for the community, and indicate the organization is a safe space for individuals to be themselves.

Services for LGBTQ persons or newcomers were available or linked to on 23 of the websites (59%; T=64%, V=50%). Forty-six percent (n=18) of the websites mentioned or linked to services for LGBTQ persons overall, with 48% (n=12) in Toronto and 43% (n=6) in Vancouver. This finding was unexpected as only two of the organizations in our sample (5%) explicitly catered to the LGBTQ community. This suggests that organizations in Toronto and Vancouver identify LGBTQ youth as population requiring attention. For newcomers, the availability of services was even greater; 51% (n=20) of the websites mentioned or linked to services for immigrants and/or refugees. Again, the percentage was greater for Toronto with 56% (n=14) of websites doing so compared to Vancouver at 43% (n=6). While these numbers may seem surprising considering only three of the 39 youth-serving organizations were identified as settlement-oriented, it reflects the large newcomer population in these cities. What is surprising is that despite the large number of organizations offering services to newcomers, few allowed users to view their websites in a language other than English; again, this creates a barrier for linguistic minorities seeking resources.

Services available specifically for LGBTQ newcomers was only mentioned on four websites (10%; T=12%, V=7%). These services are explored in the Stage 2 findings below. One could argue that LGBTQ newcomer youth can choose and benefit from programs and services for either newcomers or LGBTQ persons, though this notion ignores the unique lived experiences and interventions these youth require; this is addressed in the stage 2 findings.

We should not expect most youth-serving organizations offer services and programs for LGBTQ newcomers specifically, but there is value in mentioning this group in diversity/inclusion statements or policies. This is an easy way to demonstrate inclusivity of this sizable and marginalized population, however none of the diversity/inclusion statements on these websites referenced LGBTQ newcomers. While an exhaustive consideration of every intersecting identity is unrealistic, and selecting the most important or marginalized intersections is problematic (see Hancock, 2011), these statements can explicitly mention the concept of intersecting identities. This was done by one organization in Vancouver; their website stated they value “complex, intersectional identities, and operate from an anti-oppression framework”.

Eleven (28%) did mentioned LGBTQ persons and/or newcomers separately (T=36%, V=14%). For example, one organization cites the Ontario Human Rights Code, stating they will not tolerate discrimination towards individuals based on personal characteristics including sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship/immigration status, country of origin, language spoken, and religion among others. Organizations commonly cited diversity and inclusion as a core value.

Finally, four websites (10%) displayed racially diverse images of LGBTQ persons. This was determined in all four instances by photographs of individuals either wearing or holding LGBTQ symbols (e.g. rainbow flags, pro-LGBTQ messages), or participating in a pride celebration. Judgements of one’s sexuality and gender were not drawn from personal characteristics, and none of the websites included images of behaviors such as same-sex couples holding hands or kissing. It is also noted that the individuals pictured may not actually belong to the LGBTQ community – they may be heterosexual, cis-gender allies or models – though they still provide a visual representation for LGBTQ newcomers navigating the website.

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

Stage 2: Services Offered to LGBTQ Newcomer Youth

While 23 of the 39 youth-serving organizations in this study were identified as providing services for either newcomers or the LGBTQ community separately, just four did so for LGBTQ newcomers specifically. Three are located in Toronto: an agency providing counseling and settlement services to Chinese Canadians, a newcomer-oriented organization that runs community and settlement programs, and an LGBTQ centered organization that offers anonymous support for individuals in Ontario under 29 years through telephone, text, and messaging services. The Vancouver-based organization caters to the LGBTQ community and aims to provide a safe space where support, connections, and leadership is facilitated.

The approaches to care taken by these four organizations can be categorized into four themes: cultural and linguistic sensitivity, skills development & education, socialization & community connections, and health & well-being. These categories do overlap, and they ought to; that is, educational seminars and counseling services should be culturally sensitive, medication workshops can both educate and socialize, and youth help lines may provide support in multiple languages. However, these themes will be addressed here categorically to illuminate the strengths of each approach.

Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity

Cultural and linguistic sensitivity in care is championed by multiple studies (see, e.g. Reading & Rubin, 2011; Kahn et al. 2018). This seemed to be a common approach used by the four organizations serving LGBTQ newcomer youth. The Toronto-based settlement organization aims to unite cultures and offered their programs in over 30 languages; their website stated that staff are trained by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants to appropriately serve LGBTQ newcomers. The other Toronto-based organization serving Chinese Canadians emphasized culturally and linguistically sensitive counseling and settlement services.

Skills Development & Education

Skills development is important for setting marginalized youth on a healthy path to adulthood, and by focusing on development goals rather than personal deficits, youth-serving organizations can better hold youth interest (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997). The Toronto-based settlement organization provided a life-skills building workshops for LGBTQ youth that focused on building self-esteem, a positive body image, leadership skills, healthy relationships, as well as understanding culture and values. They also assisted in employment searches and teach youth general skills required for success in their new home.

In addition to skills building, education on queer issues benefit LGBTQ newcomer youth directly and indirectly. Children and youth who learn about LBGTQ people and issues are more empathetic and interested in advocating for them; the inclusion and acknowledgement of LGBTQ persons and issues contributes to a reduction in hostile school environments (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; McCarty-Caplan, 2013). Community and youth-serving organizations play an important role in providing such education.

A sex education series focusing on the experiences of gay and lesbian Chinese youth was offered by the Toronto-based organization serving Chinese Canadians. The webpage for the program expressed in detail the challenges facing young gay and lesbian Chinese persons, including social discrimination, lack of acceptance in Chinese culture and families, rejection in religion and the school system, as well as loneliness. While the webpage for the program detailed such challenges in depth, as well as coping behaviors, further details on the program were absent. It is not clear how the education series was structured, whether it was a lecture or facilitated discussion, for example.

This education series appeared to target non-LGB individuals who want to learn more, such as parents or peers. As people learn more about LGBTQ issues, they become more accepting (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003). Thus, this program stands to be beneficial as family acceptance of LGB youth reduces the risk of substance use, risky sexual behavior, and adverse mental health outcomes in young adults (Ryan et al. 2010). Absent from this program and website was a recognition of transgender persons and issues.

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

The help-line website also linked to resources for service providers, which included an LGBTQ cultural competency toolkit. This is important as many service providers in Canada know little about the intersectional needs of LGBTQ newcomers fleeing persecution (Kahn et al.,

2018). Providers with a greater knowledge of lived experiences and appropriate interventions for this intersection stand to reduce barriers and provide more effective care.

Employment services are especially important for LGBTQ newcomer youth as they face many barriers entering and succeeding in the workplace; they include language difficulties, immigration status, bureaucratic processes, and perceived racism (Stewart et al., 2008). Around sixty percent of Canadian immigrants are underemployed or unemployed (Grant, 2016). Additionally, LGBTQ persons experience challenges in securing and maintaining suitable employment due to homophobia (See Waite et al. (2019) and references therein). The anticipation of discrimination lowers the career expectations of LGBTQ persons and they expect to earn less than their heterosexual counterparts (Ng et al., 2012). While many organizations in this study offered employment programs, none offered employment services for LGBTQ newcomer youth specifically.

Socialization & Community Connections

Opportunities for youth to socialize and network with the community can combat social isolation and facilitate positive connections with providers (See Garcia et al. (2020) and references therein). Social isolation is especially a concern for LGBTQ newcomers and can lead to maladaptive coping behaviors such as substance use (Keuroghlian et al., 2018). In addition to addressing social isolation, socialization builds resilience in LGBTQ newcomers – this is a key trait in resisting adverse mental health outcomes that result from the challenges these youth face (Alessi, 2016).

Socialization opportunities are commonly offered by youth-serving organizations. Some are more oriented towards addressing challenges directly through community-based psychosocial

support or group therapy; this approach is commonly suggested in the literature as an effective intervention for LGBTQ newcomers (Kahn et al., 2018; Logie et al., 2016; Reading & Rubin, 2011). Others are more informal and merely offer an opportunity for youth spend enjoyable time with their peers.

The Vancouver-based LGBTQ-serving organization provided many socialization opportunities. They included a drop-in for the newcomer community that promised social activities and games, hangouts, and fun events; their stated aim was to establish a sense of belonging and meaningful friendships in the local LGBTQ community. Also offered was small group dialogues for both documented and undocumented newcomers, as well as networking sessions to connect these youth with local settlement LGBTQ-friendly service providers. The Toronto-based settlement organization offered a leadership and life skills workshop series for LGBTQ2S newcomer youth aged 13-29; it promised to be a friend-making opportunity.

Health & Wellbeing

Meditation workshops were offered to LGBTQ newcomer youth by the Vancouver-based organization. These sessions were offered to improve mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being to better to deal with life challenges. There is evidence for the efficacy of meditation in young adults who have never meditated before (Mohan et al., 2011). These sessions also aimed to improve the spirituality of LGBTQ newcomers which is effective in building resilience for some (Alessi, 2016). Thus, this casual introduction of meditation practices stands to benefit LGBTQ newcomer youth.

The LGBTQ help-line website linked to culturally and linguistically appropriate sexual health education and outreach programs. They included services for LGBTQ Asian youth, a

sexual assault survivor support program, an LGBTQ focused identity affirmation and cognitive-behavioral integrated intervention program, and other counseling services. The website emphasized that all services are immigrant and refugee friendly.

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

Discussion

Again, this study is based on the concept of intersectionality. Youth are more than a portion of the population between a certain age, newcomers are more than individuals who have recently migrated to a new country, and LGBTQ persons are not solely defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity. Within these labels are great diversity and overlap; unique lived experiences present different challenges and needs. While general services offered by youth-serving organizations may be beneficial to LGBTQ newcomer youth, they may not be optimal; programs and services considering only single identity markers will fail to reflect and effectively address these lived realities. Distinct challenges require tailored interventions rather than blanket solutions.

Considering this, we should not expect every or most youth-serving organization target LGBTQ persons, newcomers, and the intersection of the two. There are numerous groups that would benefit from specialized attention, and organizational resources are limited. No group is more important than another, and these organizations are free to allocate resources to whichever

group they decide. That said, considering the number of young LGBTQ immigrants and refugees in Canada, and the particularly difficult situations they experience, a significant percentage of these organizations should at least demonstrate inclusivity regardless of services offered.

Regarding linguistic inclusivity, this study does not advocate that every or most organizations offer programs and services in multiple languages – it is logistically challenging for organizations and can also present a barrier for LGBTQ newcomer youth if served by members of the same community (Keuroghlian et al., 2018). Care from providers perceived as belonging to one's racial or ethnic community can promote identity concealment behavior in LGBTQ newcomers as they may fear being outed to their family (Keuroghlian et al., 2018).

This concern was expressed by the Vancouver-based LGBTQ organization; they stated that while refugees can find support from community members sharing the same country of origin, many LGBTQ refugees and newcomers migrated to flee homophobia and transphobia experienced in their community back home. The Chinese Canadian serving organization also appeared to be aware of such concerns – confidentiality was stressed in bolded text, punctuated with an exclamation mark. Confidentiality was also a key promise on the LGBTQ youth helpline website.

Since services administered to LGBTQ newcomer youth by those from the same linguistic/cultural community may inhibit disclosure, predominantly English- or French-speaking, culturally non-specific organizations may be a more comfortable alternative; a multilingual website will aid these youth in discovering them. Websites should be accessible to linguistic minorities in the same way most buildings provide wheelchair access – it appears to be a relatively easy way to serve as many people as possible. One may argue that since newcomer youth can pick up English or French relatively quickly in school, multi-lingual websites become

less essential; this study contends that websites should be linguistically accessible to these youth immediately upon (or even before) their arrival.

In addition to the inclusivity measures outlined at the onset of this study, this analysis identified other accessibility and inclusivity considerations that can benefit our subpopulation. One of the organizations expressed that their services are decentralized, offering programs in libraries, schools, and community centers across the city they operate in. This is important for youth who depend on family for transportation, especially those who are not open about their sexuality or gender identity. For example, being dropped off at a meditation workshop for LGBTQ newcomers may “out” the individual before they are ready.

All the services offered to LGBTQ newcomer youth in this study also appear to be free of charge. This is similarly important for youth who are financially dependent on their family and fear disclosure, or those who are in a financially precarious situation themselves. Low- or no-cost programs are more accessible for low-income families and individuals; this stands to benefit immigrants and refugees as they are likely to be at an economic disadvantage upon arrival compared to established immigrants and Canadian-born individuals (Crossman, 2013).

Recommendations for Best Practices

This study has demonstrated that youth-serving organizations in Canada have much room for improvement regarding LGBTQ newcomer inclusivity. Building on these findings, this section provides recommendations that may aid these organizations in recognizing the unique needs and diversity of the youth they serve. These recommendations highlight best practices for improving inclusivity and accessibility with an emphasis on the role of organization and government policies.

Inclusivity

Greater inclusivity can be accomplished in multiple ways – this analysis used eight inclusivity metrics – and many require little effort on behalf of the organization. This includes the inclusion of LGBTQ-friendly images and racially diverse photos of LGBTQ persons on their website, as well as the ability to translate website content into different languages.

An inclusion/diversity statement that mentions LGBTQ persons and newcomers should also be displayed on the website – the concept of intersectionality can be outlined to inform visitors that overlap exists between identities. Organizations should also provide programming for LGBTQ newcomers; if such services are beyond their scope or available resources, the website can provide links to settlement or LGBTQ-serving organizations and services.

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

This analysis found that transgender persons were rarely addressed, even by organizations identified as LGBTQ friendly. While often lumped in with their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer peers, the experiences of transgender persons are notably distinct and often

more severe (Daley et al., 2008); they would benefit from explicit recognition and resources/programing specific to them.

Accessibility

Services should be geographically and financially accessible to youth. This can be achieved through decentralized and low- or no-cost programing. The organizations in this study mostly offered free or inexpensive services, largely achieved through government subsidies. As noted, this is especially important for low-income families, which include newcomers disproportionately.

Governments can also contribute to the accessibility of these youth-serving organizations by promoting a comprehensive list of them; the sample of youth-serving organizations in this study was sourced from their respective city's websites. However, these lists are most useful when the provided links work; on the City of Vancouver's webpage listing youth-serving organizations, 67 of the 212 links (or 32%) were not accurate as of June 12, 2019. They were either broken links or directed users to unrelated websites. For example, one link directed to a page full of flashy Chinese advertisements promoting online gambling, another to an Ontario-based real estate blog. These broken or inaccurate links create a barrier in the help-seeking process – governments and organizations should continually ensure links and websites are up to date.

The Role of Policy

Greater inclusivity starts with a policy that mandates it. Organizational policies serve as a blueprint for their operations – it guides the inception, implementation, and maintenance of both programing and their website. Youth-serving organizations ought to create and implement evidence informed policies that centre on inclusivity, accessibility, cultural & linguistic

sensitivity, and the concept of intersectionality. An intersectional approach is especially important in policy development as it “not only prevents interventions that disproportionately benefit a small subset of the population but also opens the door to creating policy that may be far more effective in responding to all those in need (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011, p.118-119)”. While some organizations had strong inclusion and diversity policy documents, they did not always express their guiding principles on their websites.

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

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

Thus, in addition to organizational policies that mandate inclusivity, we ought to pressure and elect governments that demonstrate a commitment to inclusiveness, diversity, and financial

support for youth-serving and community organizations. This will ensure marginalized youth, including LGBTQ newcomers, have greater access to appropriate and beneficial resources.

Future Research

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

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

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APPENDIX

Results of the first research question's eight sub-questions (see below), in total and by city.

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

Questions:

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