

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

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Strengthening supports for 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth

What you need to know:

2SLGBTQ+ youth have been identified in British Columbia (BC) as an at-risk group for poorer mental health as they face additional challenges compared to their peers. Guidelines and practices for mental health services can help reduce intersectional discrimination faced by individuals and their families accessing mental health services.

What is this research about?

This research looks at ways to strengthen mental health services supports for 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth and their families in BC. 2SLGBTQ+ is defined as Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Additional Identities not Specifically Named.

The BC Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) services provide free and voluntary community-based mental health supports provincially, with roughly 100 intake clinics for children, youth, and their families throughout BC. This research explores policies and practices to provide exemplar guidelines to MCFD's CYMH services in providing care for sex, sexuality, and gender diverse populations.

What did the researcher do?

The researcher conducted a literature review and jurisdictional scan exploring promising policies, practices and training in Canadian government and non-government mental health services that honour the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression for 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth and families.

The researcher used the University of Victoria (UVic) Libraries' Summon 2.0 Database and the Google Scholar search engine to collect literature and then reviewed citations to identify additional sources. The researcher analyzed the literature for key themes, which were then used to guide the jurisdictional scan for 2SLGBTQ+ specific services Canada-wide. Finally, the researcher analyzed both the literature and jurisdictional scan for recommendations for practice.



UVic researchers analyzed literature to strengthen mental health supports for 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth and their families (Photo credit: Delia Giandeini from UnSplash).



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What did the researcher find?

The scan included academic and grey literature and a review of 47 2SLGBTQ+ specific services and programs across Canada. The researcher proposed recommendations organized by three themes:

1. *Creating a Safer Space* - CYMH supports could be strengthened by providing welcoming environments for 2SLGBTQ+ youth within office and online spaces, not restricting washrooms to biological sex, improving methods around data collection, enforcing and making clear confidentiality of youth's identity, mandating training for office staff on inclusivity, and having designated counsellors for youth explicitly concerned about their gender or sexual identity
2. *Referable Services* - having CYMH become familiar with and refer youth to services such as phone lines, support groups, and other unique resources like 2SLGBTQ+ specific camps can help in further supporting them and their families
3. *Overreaching Policies & Intersections* – view CYMH policies through a *social determinants of health lens* to consider non-medical factors that influence health outcomes, including Indigenous identity, religion, and rurality

How can you use this research?

This research and its resulting recommendations provide evidence-based exemplars of promising policies, practices and training from all provinces and territories in Canada. It guides the policy and practice for MCFD's CYMH services highlighting the importance of "Creating a safer space," "Referable services" and "Overreaching policies and intersections" to better support 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth and their families.

This research is also relevant to other Canadian and international mental health services that strive to honour the sexual orientation, gender identity, and

gender expression for 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth and families.

About the researchers

Jordan Monks is a UVic graduate student. This project was completed as part of the [Graduate Studies \(GS\) 505](#) course and supervised by instructors Dr. Alison Gerlach and Ms. Thais Amorim. Facilitated by UVic [Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization](#), GS 505 is a partnership between MCFD and UVic.

Keywords

2SLGBTQ+ / LGBT*; queer; trans / transgender; mental health; counselling; youth; child*; adolescent*

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