

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION



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3 key approaches to an LGBTQ+ inclusive child welfare breakthrough

What you need to know:

LGBTQ+ youths' basic human needs for safety, fair treatment, and support often go unmet in child welfare. This research identifies three key child welfare improvements LGBTQ+ youth need: supportive policy, staff training, and community support.

What is this research about?

Growing up, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and people with other gender and sexual minority identities (LGBTQ+) are more likely to face negative treatment. Many LGBTQ+ youth need child welfare services.

Under the child welfare system, they may experience barriers to appropriate care. Staff in care homes sometimes lack sexual orientation understanding. Even worse, they may refuse to acknowledge or talk with youth about their needs. This leaves some LGBTQ+ youth feeling devalued and unsafe.

This project informs the Province of British Columbia's (BC) Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) on how to 1) increase gender

inclusivity, 2) support LGBTQ+ youth, and 3) aid decision-making benefiting LGBTQ+ youth.

What did the researcher do?

Researchers at the University of Victoria (UVic) examined LGBTQ+ child welfare best practices to make recommendations for improving current approaches in BC. The researchers focused on how organizations foster support for LGBTQ+ youth and how social workers make informed decisions on these young people's needs.



LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to become depressed, suicidal, or homeless. Traumatic child welfare and family experiences are a factor in this. Researchers Fisher & Sharma give hope and direction for LGBTQ+ youth care (Photo credit: Angela Compagnone from Unsplash).



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What did the researcher find?

This research revealed promising examples of improving support for LGBTQ+ youth in child welfare. Findings suggest LGBTQ+ child welfare needs improvement in three key areas: policy, staff training, and community support. Additionally, researchers discussed techniques for making informed-decisions for LGBTQ+ youth about transitioning and placements. Policy and practical recommendations for improving inclusivity, fostering supportive environments, and making informed-decisions are included in the full report.

How can you use this research?

This research is very important for organizations developing child welfare policy and procedures. It also provides helpful information for LGBTQ+ youth advocates and caregivers who can use the findings to foster inclusivity.

The intent of the research was to give the BC MCFD relevant information to support LGBTQ+ youth in their care. The findings present key areas to focus on for improving ministry policy and practice. The suggested improvements foster supportive, gender inclusive environments and better decision-making by social workers for LGBTQ+ youth.

About the researchers

Alexandra Fisher and Priyanka Sharma are University of Victoria (UVic) graduate students. This project was completed as part of the [Graduate Studies \(GS\) 505](#) course and supervised by instructors Drs. Gord Miller and Wayne Mitic. Facilitated by UVic [Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization](#), GS 505 is a partnership between MCFD and UVic. This project was prepared on behalf of MCFD.

Keywords

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