

LGBTQ2S YOUTH HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH FINDINGS

HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA NORMALIZED IN THE SHELTER SYSTEM

None of the shelter staff interviewed had received any anti-homophobia training or LGBTQ2S cultural competency training because it had not been made mandatory.

The lack of proper training results in lack of knowledge and ignorance towards LGBTQ2S people, making it even more difficult for staff to intervene and stop incidents of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

ERASURE AND INVISIBILITY OF LGBTQ2S YOUTH

Youth interviewed were unaware of the City of Toronto's complaints process, or would not consider lodging a complaint because the procedure is not accessible to them.

A "complaint driven" system, such as the shelter system, requires an accessible process for youth to lodge formal and anonymous complaints.

The City of Toronto shelter standards were updated after this study was completed, and LGBTQ2S cultural competency training has been made mandatory for all shelter staff.



The shelter system is often a dangerous place for LGBTQ2S youth, due to widespread discrimination that is rarely acknowledged or addressed.

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are normalized when:

- Shelter staff do not prioritize intervening and stopping homophobic and transphobic discrimination or violence.
- Policies and standards aren't updated and maintained.

INSUFFICIENT STAFF TRAINING



There is a fundamental lack of acknowledgment of LGBTQ2S youths' existence in shelters.

Institutional rules and policies that do not consider and include LGBTQ2S people (e.g. intake forms providing only "female/male" options), end up erasing many identities. Those who are not included are not counted in key reports and statistics and are made invisible. Those who are not included are not counted in key reports and statistics.



This study took place in Toronto, Ontario 2011-2014, by Dr. Alex Abramovich, however, many of the findings and recommendations are relevant to organizations and housing programs serving youth across Canada.

Written by Dr. Alex Abramovich (2016) SOURCES: Abramovich, A. (2014). Young, Queer and Trans, Homeless, and Besieged: A Critical Action Research Study of How Policy and Culture Create Oppressive Conditions for LGBTQ Youth in Toronto's Shelter System. University of Toronto.

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