

WORK, INCLUSION AND 2SLGBTQ+ PEOPLE

IN SUDBURY AND WINDSOR





Suzanne Mills
McMaster University

Benjamin Owens
McMaster University

Adrian Guta
University of Windsor

Nathaniel Lewis
University of Southampton

Natalie Oswin
University of Toronto

July 15, 2020

Research partners:

Adriane Paavo, United Steelworkers

Sarah McCue, Unifor

Mélodie Bérubé*, Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre

Paul Chislett, Windsor Workers Education Centre

Community advisors & contributors:

Bobby Jay Aubin, **Derrick Carl Biso**, **Dani Bobb**, **Vincent Bolt**, **Lynne Descary**, **Debra Dumouchelle**, **Dana Dunphy**, **Mel Jobin**, **Paul Pasanen**

Research assistance:

John Antoni*, **Lee Czechowski**, **Angela Di Nello**, **Laurel O’Gorman***, **Leah McGrath Reynolds**, **Kai Squires**

Special thanks to **Randy Jackson**

* also worked as community advisory committee members

Graphic Design: Mixtape Branding/Ryan White, R.G.D.



Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: Introduction	4
CHAPTER 2: Methods and sample	6
2.1 Research partners and community engagement	6
2.2 Language	6
2.3 Data collection	6
2.4 Analysis	6
2.4.1 Internet survey	6
2.5 Who we heard from	7
2.5.1 Survey	7
2.5.2 Interview participants	9
CHAPTER 3: Community	10
3.1 Isolation and disconnection	10
Box 3.1 Racialization and acceptance	11
3.2 Feelings of connection, support and change	13
3.3 The push-pull of larger centres	13
CHAPTER 4: Where are people working and why are they working there?	14
4.1 Occupations and industries	14
4.2 Job characteristics	15
4.3 Choosing supportive industries and workplaces	16
4.4 Employer discrimination and the labour market	16
Box 4.1: Transgender workers in the labour market	18
CHAPTER 5: Experiences at work	20
5.1 Comfort at work and ‘outness’	20
5.2 Discrimination at work: dress codes and bathrooms	22
5.3 Homophobia and transphobia at work	22
CHAPTER 6: Mental health	26
6.1 Self-reported mental and physical health	26
6.2 Work and mental health	26
6.2.1 Workplace characteristics	27
6.2.2 2SLGBTQ+ identity and work	28
6.3 Coping strategies	29
CHAPTER 7: Unions and employers	32
7.1 Where would you go for help with discrimination?	32
7.2 Union experiences	33
7.3 Employer experiences	34
CHAPTER 8: Recommendations	36
8.1 Recommendations for employers	36
8.2 Recommendations for unions	37
8.3 Recommendations for community organizations	37
8.4 Recommendations for everyone	37
Literature cited	38

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other gender and sexual minorities (2SLGBTQ+) are often depicted in the media as white-collar workers who live in large metropolitan centres. Consequently, the experiences of working-class people, as well as those who live in smaller industrial cities are generally absent from stories about 2SLGBTQ+ lives and livelihoods. At the same time, the working-class histories of smaller cities tend to centre the struggles of white, heterosexual, male-dominated unions in the mining and manufacturing sectors and leave out the sexualized, gendered, racialized¹, settler colonial and classed experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ workers. This report presents the findings of a two-year study of the experiences of a large and diverse sample of 2SLGBTQ+ workers in the mid-sized cities of Sudbury and Windsor to address these gaps.

Sudbury's population is 164,689 (Statistics Canada, 2017a). It is located on ancestral lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and is covered by the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. Sparsely inhabited prior to European contact, it became more densely populated during the fur trade from 1822-1900 as the Hudson's Bay Company established several posts and stores in the Sudbury area. Sudbury became a settler town in 1883 as a company town site of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Mining operations, followed by other company towns, then speeded settlement beginning with Copper Cliff in 1888. Indigenous peoples continue to have a strong presence in the city, with people reporting First Nation, Inuit or Métis origins comprising 12.5% of Sudbury's population in 2016.² At 26% of the population, Franco-Ontarians also comprise a high proportion of Sudbury residents. Sudbury is the largest city in Northern Ontario and serves as a service centre for smaller northern cities and northern First Nations. Finally, although Sudbury is not widely known for its 2SLGBTQ+ culture, it boasts an annual queer film festival, a gay bar, numerous 2SLGBTQ+ focused services and an annual pride celebration.³

Windsor's population is 329,144 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Historically the meeting place for the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie, Windsor's colonization by francophone settlers began in the 1700s. Subsequently, it was a site of skirmishes in the War of 1812, it was the entry point of the Underground Railroad into Canada, and the site of rum-running during Prohibition. Contemporary Windsor is the southernmost city in Canada, located directly across the border from the US city of Detroit, Michigan. In terms of its demographics, 27% of the total population of the City of Windsor are newcomers (The City of Windsor, 2020). Like Sudbury, Windsor is not widely known for its 2SLGBTQ+ culture. Yet there is an annual Windsor-Essex Pride Fest⁴, and much LGBT nightlife. There are also many 2SLGBTQ+ social service organizations, such as Windsor-Essex Transgender and Allied Support, Windsor Pride Community, and Two-Spirit Group of Windsor.

Sudbury and Windsor have proud labour histories in the mining and automotive manufacturing sectors respectively. Since the 1970s, however, each city has experienced deindustrialization. For example, employment at Inco (now Vale), declined from 20,000 in 1971 to approximately 3,000 in 2009 (King, 2017). In the case of Windsor, while each of the "Big Three" (Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors) were once all major employers, today only the Ford and Chrysler plants remain active as the General Motors transmission plant shuttered in 2010. As of 2016, 8.0% of the labour force in Sudbury worked in mining and quarrying and 19.9% of the labour force worked in the manufacturing sector in Windsor (Statistics Canada, 2017a; Statistics Canada, 2017b). In broad terms, deindustrialization has led to rising unemployment, and a shift towards less stable and less well-paid forms of work. While now less prevalent, industrial work is still present in each community and continues to have an influence over gender and sexuality norms and values. So, while both Windsor and Sudbury each have strong and close knit 2SLGBTQ+ communities, the labour markets in both cities only have a narrow range of well-paid employment, and homophobia, transphobia and racism persist.



¹ People who are racialized as non-white or people of colour will be referred to as racialized people for the remainder of the report

² There are two First Nations in the greater Sudbury area: Wahnapietee First Nation and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation as well as a large non-status population.

³ The first pride parade was held in Sudbury in 1997, motivated in part, by employment discrimination against a lesbian grocery store worker and more recent pride celebrations have had a strong union presence (Kinsman, 2017).

⁴ A legacy of the Lesbian and Gay Pride Day Festival, which was first held in 1992.

LGBTQ2SIA+ ANONYMOUS SURVEY

Share your experiences working in
SUDBURY & WINDSOR

WORKINCLUSION.CA/SURVEY



SOCIAL SCIENCES



To gain insight into the work experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Sudbury and Windsor, our research team collected 673 survey responses and conducted 50 in-depth interviews. This report sets out the findings of this research. It shows that despite the many advances that have been made in Canada in terms of sexual and gender minority rights and politics, most do not feel comfortable at work. Just over half (50.6%) of the 2SLGBTQ+ workers surveyed were not fully out at work and 70.5% of workers experienced some type of harassment or discrimination in their current job. Those surveyed were also less likely to be working in well-paid jobs in mining and/or manufacturing than the general population and were more likely to be working in the low-wage service and/or the public sector. Reports of unsupportive workplaces were common in all sectors, with people working in male-dominated sectors or occupations least likely to feel supported at work. When workers did not feel comfortable and supported at work, they were also more likely to have poor mental health. Transgender and racialized workers in our sample faced even greater constraints and challenges in the labour market and workplace and transgender and bisexual participants had poorer mental health than lesbian and gay participants.

The next chapter describes our research team, research methods, and participants. Chapters 3 through 7 describe our findings, covering topics such as mental health, ties to community, relationships to unions and employers, which sectors our respondents work in, and their overall experiences at work. The final chapter lays out measures we propose that government and community agencies, as well as individual workplaces, in Sudbury, Windsor, and Ontario more broadly could consider to further support the livelihoods of 2SLGBTQ+ workers.

Just over half of the 2SLGBTQ+ workers surveyed were not fully out at work and two thirds of workers experienced some type of harassment or discrimination in their current job.

CHAPTER 2

Methods and sample

We adopted a community-engaged, mixed-methods approach that included union and 2SLGBTQ+ partners and community members at all stages of the research process. The research involved two phases: a survey in the summer and fall of 2018 and face-to-face interviews in the summer and fall of 2019.

2.1 Research partners and community engagement

The project research team included: professors from Laurentian University, McMaster University, University of Toronto, University of Southampton, and University of Windsor; staff from the national offices of Canada's two largest private-sector unions (Unifor and United Steelworkers, Canada); and two local worker centres (Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre, and the Windsor Workers Education Centre).

Community Advisory Committees (CACs) comprised of local members of partner unions and individuals from the 2SLGBTQ+ communities in both cities advised on survey design, participant recruitment and results sharing. Efforts were made to represent the diversity of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities in each city, with attention to age, racialization, gender identity, Indigeneity and sexual orientation.

The research team also built relationships with the following local service organizations to facilitate participant recruitment and dissemination of results: Fierté Sudbury Pride, TG InnerSelves, Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre, and Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre in Sudbury; and W.E. Trans Support, Windsor Pride Community, and Windsor-Essex Pride Fest in Windsor.

2.2 Language

Language is dynamic and can be used to affirm or deny people's identities and lived experiences. To ensure inclusion of everyone under the broad umbrella of gender and sexual minorities, we use the acronym 2SLGBTQ+ throughout this report as a shorthand for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and all other gender and sexual minorities.

2.3 Data collection

During July 6–December 2, 2018, we collected survey responses through an e-survey distributed in both cities. Eligible survey participants lived within the Greater Sudbury and Windsor regions, were over the age of 16, identified as 2SLGBTQ+, and had worked in the past year. A \$5 coffee card was provided as an incentive to survey participants. To reduce sampling bias, we encouraged survey participants to distribute the survey to friends using a prize incentive.

E-surveys were supplemented by paper surveys to ensure that communities and social groups with little internet use and access are represented. The survey was disseminated by partners and supporting organizations using postcards, radio commercials, social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram, and emails to employees of large organizations. Ads were also placed on the gay meet-up platforms Scruff and Grindr in both cities. We recruited survey participants using tables at local pride celebrations where respondents could fill out online surveys on iPads. We also recruited participants at the Up Here festival in Sudbury and a community event at the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor.

During June–November 2019, the research team completed 50 interviews with 2SLGBTQ+ workers living in Sudbury or Windsor. Interview participants who met the same criteria as survey participants were recruited through social media, pride festivities, word of mouth, and participants referring people in their networks, and those who expressed interest during the survey phase. Interview participants were selected with the aim of representing a broad range of workplaces and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, sexual orientation, racialization, and Indigeneity. We provided a \$25 incentive to participants.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Internet survey

When analyzing survey results, we categorized gender identity and sexual orientation into new variables with fewer categories to increase the explanatory power of statistical tests. Gender identity was recoded into a three-category variable: (1) cisgender, (2) transgender, and (3) other gender identity. The cisgender category includes respondents who identified as cisgender woman or cisgender man. The transgender category includes respondents who identified as a transgender man, transgender woman, non-binary, or genderqueer/gender non-conforming/gender variant. Because of low numbers, respondents who identified as intersex and Two-Spirit were combined into 'other gender identity.'



Sexual orientation was also recoded into a four-category variable: (1) bisexual/pansexual, (2) lesbian, (3) gay, (4) queer. Bisexual and pansexual were combined, and questioning, heterosexual, two-spirit, asexual, and not sure were dropped due to small sample sizes. Finally, in order to isolate the effects of sexual orientation in cross-tabulations, a second recoded variable adopted the same four categories as the third recoded variable but only included cisgender respondents.

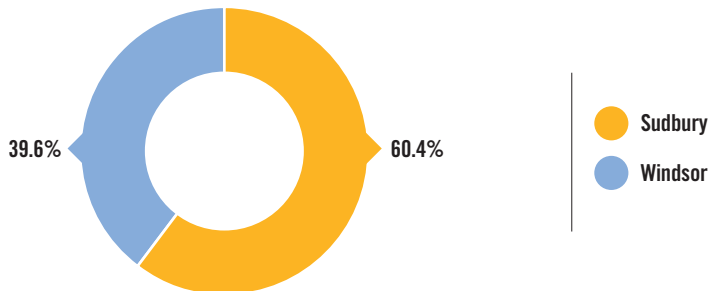
Survey data were analyzed with frequency tables, cross-tabulations, and chi-square tests run using the quantitative analysis software Stata. Statistically significant and non-significant results in cross-tabulations were determined through chi-square analysis. P-values higher than 0.05 (or not within a 95% confidence interval) were interpreted as non-significant (i.e., unable to exclude the null hypothesis of no difference). Interviews were analyzed inductively using the qualitative analysis software NVIVO to identify emergent themes. Once interviews were coded, common stories and key quotes were identified and selected by researchers.

2.5 Who we heard from

2.5.1 Survey

We received 673 survey responses: 405 from Sudbury (60.4%) and 266 in Windsor (39.6%, Figure 2.5.1.1). The estimated labour force for each city in September of 2018 was 87,639.5 in Sudbury and 177,678.8 in Windsor (Statistics Canada 2018).

Figure 2.5.1.1: Percent of survey respondents from Windsor and Sudbury. N=671



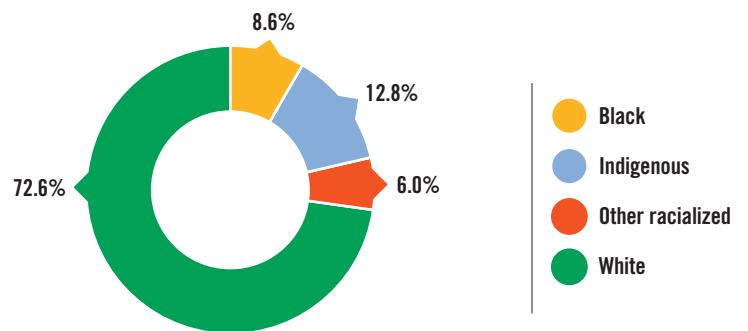
The average age of survey respondents was 31.7 (range: 16-68). Compared to data from Statistics Canada, the average age of respondents skewed younger compared with the general population for both cities: in Sudbury and Windsor 61% and 60% of the labour force is under the age of 45, whereas 85% of our sample was under the age of 45 (Statistics Canada 2018, see Table 2.5.1.1).

Table 2.5.1.1: Age distribution of sample, and of the Windsor and Sudbury labour force (Statistics Canada 2018).

Age	Sample (N=616)		Windsor (177678.8)		Sudbury (87639.8)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
15-24	188	30.52	29881	16.8	14105	16.1
25-44	334	54.2	76384	42.9	39882	45.5
45-54	50	8.12	37086	20.9	14516	16.5
55-64	38	6.17	27711	15.6	15602	17.8
65+	6	0.97	6611	3.7	3599	4.1

26.3% of respondents self-identified as a member of a racialized community. When asked about their ethnic background, 65.3% of respondents from Sudbury identified as white, 18.8% as Indigenous, 10.3% as Black, and 5.5% as from another racialized group. In Windsor, 83.7% identified as white, 3.4% as Indigenous, 6.1% as Black, and 6.8% as from another racialized group (see Figure 2.5.1.2 for a breakdown of the entire sample).

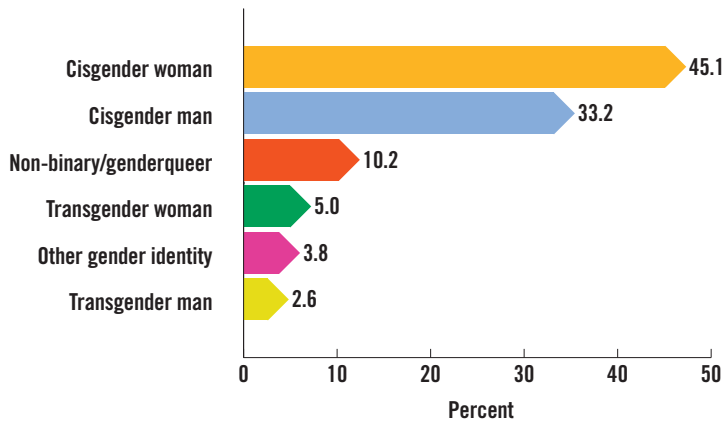
Figure 2.5.1.2: Ethnicity of survey respondents. N=663



Within our sample, Indigenous people were overrepresented in both Sudbury (18.8% vs. 9.5%) and Windsor (3.4% vs. 2.6%). Racialized people were overrepresented in Sudbury (35.6% vs. 3.7% visible minority population according to Statistics Canada) and underrepresented in Windsor (16.8% vs. 20.5% visible minority population according to Statistics Canada).

A majority of survey respondents identified as cisgender: 45.1% of respondents were cisgender women, and 33.2% were cisgender men; 10.2% identified as either non-binary, genderqueer, gender variant, or gender non-conforming; 7.6% identified as transgender men or women. Finally, 3.8% identified as another gender identity, which included Two-Spirit and intersex respondents (Figure 2.5.1.3). Of the Two-Spirit people who completed the survey, 20 were from Sudbury and 4 were from Windsor.

Figure 2.5.1.3: Gender identity of survey respondents. N=656



The most common sexual orientation of respondents was bisexual or pansexual (33.1% of the sample). Gay and lesbian respondents were the second and third most common sexual orientations, representing 28.6% and 21.7% of the sample, respectively. Other sexual orientation categories included: queer (4.7%), heterosexual (3.8%), questioning/not sure (3.6%), asexual (3.1%), and Two-Spirit (1.5%) (Table 2.5.1.2).

Table 2.5.1.2: Sexual orientation of survey respondents. N=665

Sexual Orientation	Frequency	Percent
Bisexual/pansexual	220	33.1
Gay	190	28.6
Lesbian	144	21.7
Queer	31	4.7
Heterosexual	25	3.8
Questioning/not sure	24	3.6
Asexual	21	3.2
Two-Spirit	10	1.5

When asked whether they self-identify as a person with a disability, 26.9% said ‘yes’. For the purposes of this survey, “Persons with Disabilities” means those who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment. When asked what type of disability they had, 67.7% of those with a disability said their disability was mental or cognitive, 19.5% said physical, and 12.8% said both. In total, 69.2% of respondents with a disability had a mental disability. Compared to those who identified as cisgender, those who identified as transgender, non-binary, or as having another gender identity were more likely to have a self-reported mental disability (Table 2.5.1.3). For sexual orientation, those who identified as queer, bisexual, or pansexual were most likely to have a mental disability (Table 2.5.1.4).

Table 2.5.1.3: Percent of participants in each gender identity category who self-identified as having a disability. N=644. Pearson chi-square test, df=5, $\chi^2=42.8643$, $P = 0.000$.

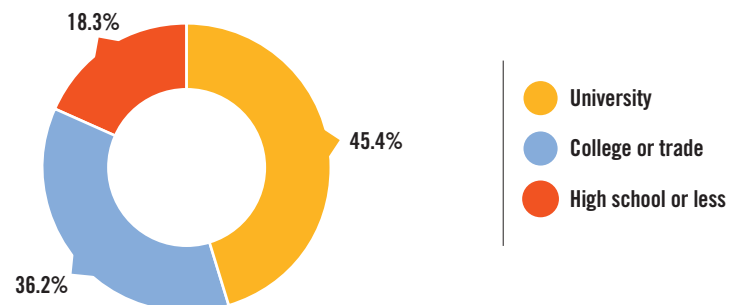
Gender Identity	% of sample with a disability	% of sample with a mental disability
Transgender man (N=16)	37.5%	23.5%
Transgender woman (N=32)	53.1%	42.4%
Cisgender woman (N=294)	23.1%	15.9%
Cisgender man (N=215)	17.7%	7.8%
Non-binary (N=63)	50.8%	40.3%
Other gender identity (N=24)	33.3%	32%

Table 2.5.1.4: Percent of participants in each sexual orientation category who self-identified as having a disability. N=577. Pearson chi-square test, df=3, $\chi^2=42.0736$, $P = 0.000$.

Gender Identity	% of sample with a disability	% of sample with a mental disability
Bisexual/pansexual (N=215)	37.2%	22.9%
Lesbian (N=143)	16.1%	5.9%
Gay (N=188)	14.9%	5.8%
Queer (N=)	48.4%	26.7%

A majority of survey respondents had attended some form of post-secondary education in their lifetime, with 45.4% having either started or completed university degrees and 36.2% having attended college or trade schools. The remaining 18.6% of the sample had a high school diploma or had not completed high school (Table 2.5.1.4). The sample population was more educated than the general population in Sudbury and Windsor. In Sudbury, 18.0% of the general population over 15 years of age reported having a university education and 46.2% reported no post-secondary education. In Windsor, 22.3% of the general population over 15 years of age reported having a university education in 2016 and 49.3% of the population reported no post-secondary education (Statistics Canada 2017a, 2017b). Among the respondents in our sample who were more than 25 years old, 40.2% had a university degree compared with 20.2% of people over 25 in Sudbury and 26.1% of people in Windsor.

Figure 2.5.1.4: Education level of survey respondents, re-sorted into 3 categories. N=665





2.5.2 Interview participants

The age range of interview participants was 19–68, and 36.9 was the average age. Six participants were racialized, and 10 identified as Indigenous. Just over half of interviewees (26) were cisgender, 13 were transgender men or women, eight identified as non-binary, two identified as fluid, and one preferred not to say. As in the survey, the largest proportion of interview participants was bisexual or pansexual (46%), followed by gay (22%), lesbian (18%), and queer (8%). The following had one participant (2%) each: heterosexual, asexual, and prefer not to say.

Interview participants worked in a range of industries. Just under half of participants currently worked in the public sector, which included jobs in education, health care, and public administration. The service sector was the second most common industry, with 14 participants working in predominantly low-waged interactive service positions. 11 participants worked in blue-collar industries, including manufacturing, mining, and transportation. Finally, three participants had white-collar jobs in the private sector, including information technology and administration for privately owned businesses. 29 participants were current members of a union. In addition to asking participants about their *current* positions, participants were also asked questions about their work *history* to capture an even greater range of industries.

Table 2.5.2.1: Characteristics of interview participants, by region. N=50

Participant Characteristics	Sudbury (N=26)	Windsor (N=24)	Total (%) (N=50)
Gender Identity			
Transgender	10	3	13 (26%)
Cisgender	12	14	26 (52%)
Non-binary	3	5	8 (16%)
Other	1	2	3 (6%)
Sexual Orientation			
Bisexual/pansexual	15	8	23 (46%)
Lesbian	3	6	9 (18%)
Gay	4	7	11 (22%)
Queer	2	2	4 (8%)
Other	2	1	3 (6%)
Race			
White	22	22	44 (88%)
Racialized	4	2	6 (12%)
Indigeneity			
Indigenous	7	3	10 (20%)
Not Indigenous	19	21	40 (80%)
Union			
Union member	10	19	29 (58%)
Not a union member	16	5	21 (42%)
Age Range			
Under 35	15	14	29 (58%)
35-54	7	5	12 (24%)
Over 55	4	5	9 (18%)

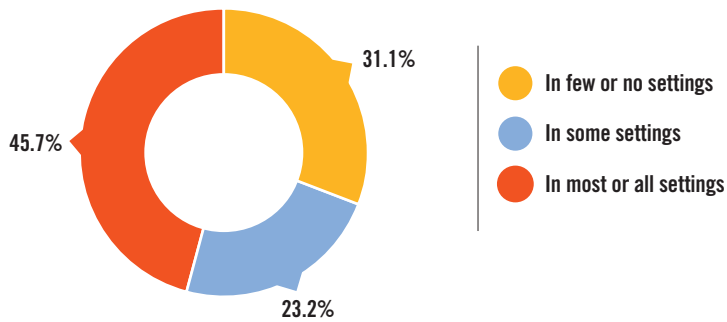
CHAPTER 3

Community

2SLGBTQ+ people’s feelings about their local communities (inclusive of geographic community and social context) were mixed: approximately half (48%) of survey respondents responded ‘neutrally,’ when asked to rate how their community perceived 2SLGBTQ+ people and only 14% responded ‘negatively.’

Although respondents did not feel that their communities perceived them negatively, most interview respondents described not feeling fully connected to other 2SLGBTQ+ people, and not always feeling comfortable or safe in their communities. In fact, fewer than half of the survey respondents described being fully ‘out’ about their gender identity or sexual orientation (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percent of respondents who were ‘out’ in their local communities. N=656



3.1 Isolation and disconnection

Interview participants in both Sudbury and Windsor related feeling disconnected to the industrial histories of their respective regions and discouraged by the small numbers and limited visibilities of 2SLGBTQ+ people. When asked if Sudbury’s mining history affected the life of 2SLGBTQ+ people, one young gay man described:

“...places like Copper Cliff ... these mining communities were centered around this heteronormative idea of like you move here, you have your family unit ... It’s very based on this specific idea of the nuclear family that we’ve had since the 1940s and 50s. So, I can definitely see how it would be difficult to be a queer person in the past and get a job in this community ... and I can see how that might have affected how Sudbury is today.” - S10 GAY MAN

When describing Windsor, one non-binary participant described:

“...it’s a very conservative minded blue-collar town and ... it impedes the way that they think about other people... they’re going to do or say discriminatory things and assume that it’s normal to do that. They’ve normalized these things and challenging it there’s a lot of splash back that happens.” - W2 NON-BINARY PERSON

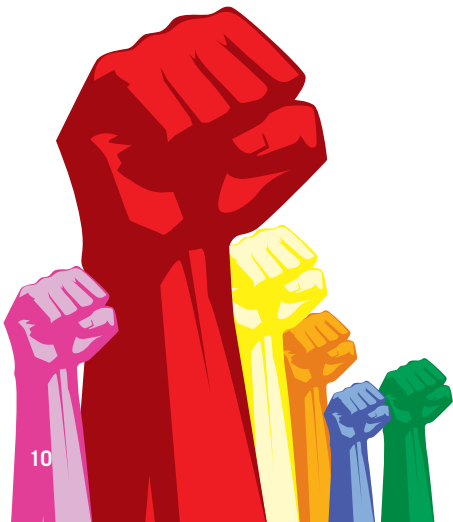
In his description of how traditional gender roles and norms were enforced in Sudbury, one transgender man described how people who were visibly gender non-conforming or transgender were likely to be harassed, though he felt that things were slowly changing:

“Absolutely ... the mind frame is definitely that of men provide and women stay at home. Men and women together. If you’re a man, you’re a man’s man. If you’re a woman like you’re a stay at home caregiver and things of that nature. So that mindset was definitely instilled hard in this community ... So that’s slowly breaking. There is definitely the older generation that is out there that is still very boxed in, but times are changing and it’s slowly progressing. But I definitely see some people that are more flamboyant or that express themselves. Like if you were to look at me you wouldn’t know that I was trans. ... if you could tell by looking at somebody, they’re definitely shamed a lot more. When it comes to being in Sudbury and being smallminded because it’s not something that’s seen every day, so people definitely stare, they definitely question, definitely judge.” - S15 TRANSGENDER MAN

The enforcement of presumptive ‘normalcy’ was also highlighted by one non-binary participant who linked being stared at in Sudbury to the small number of visibly queer people in public spaces:

“I mean I definitely get stared at. Like I can feel people watching me all the time when I’m walking around Sudbury and I don’t see like as many visibly queer people around so I kind of feel like... almost a little bit alone, if that makes sense. But I mean like I say I haven’t had any really negative experiences so it’s not awful to be a queer person in Sudbury.” - S21 NON-BINARY PERSON

NOTE: Throughout this report, ‘S’ denotes participants from Sudbury, and ‘W’ participants from Windsor.





Another participant in Sudbury linked visibility to a scarcity of services dedicated to 2SLGBTQ+ people:

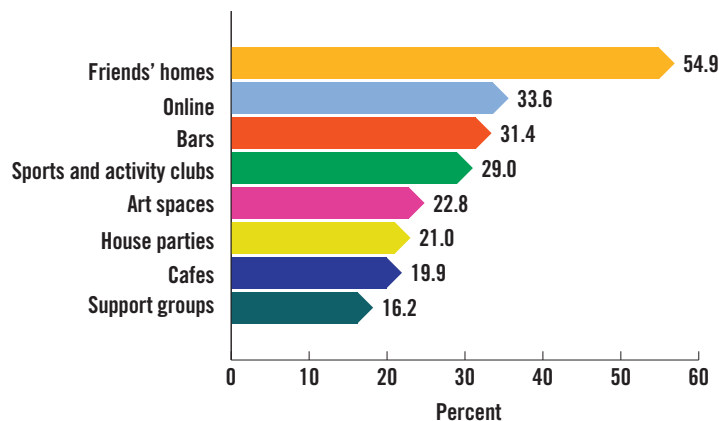
“I know that compared to other cities that I have been to, the LGBT community in Sudbury isn’t super visible either ... Like there’s a few... I mean there’s Zig’s [gay bar]. ... there’s no like gay cultural center in Sudbury as far as I can tell.” - S10 GAY MAN

One woman linked not feeling safe holding her girlfriend’s hand to a lack of support for 2SLGBTQ+ people in Windsor:

“... I’m also fearful at times ... We both feel like kind of like back out of like holding hands with each other when we see someone approaching. And I mean, that could happen in Toronto, too. I guess here in Windsor just doesn’t seem like there’s a lot of support.” - W17 PANSEXUAL WOMAN

Survey results also showed that 2SLGBTQ+ people were more likely to feel comfortable in the private spaces of friend’s homes than in public spaces such as cafes or sports clubs (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Percent of respondents who go to the following places to find a supportive environment for 2SLGBTQ+ people. Respondents could select more than one option. N=672



Box 3.1 Racialization and acceptance

Racialized and Indigenous interview participants described feeling isolated and disconnected from the 2SLGBTQ+ community in their cities. One Indigenous participant shared:

“I don’t really go out too much into the community. Like I talk to some people who are within the community but at the same time they’re like me where they are part of it, but they are not actually a part of it. Like I would like to be more a part of it, but I don’t even know like how to be.” - S16 TRANSGENDER MAN

A racialized participant shared similar experiences:

“It’s really small and people here—I used to live in Toronto before—are a lot different than people elsewhere that I’ve lived. ... if you don’t look a certain way it’s almost like you’re not... like you wear lipstick, just stupid silly things ... I never felt like I identified with that group at all, not here anyway.”

INTERVIEWER: *“Do you find it different from in Toronto?”*

“Yeah big time. Well there’s a lot more people, a lot more people who are like me, a lot more people who are Black or Hispanic ...” - W3 BISEXUAL WOMAN

These interviewees’ feelings of not belonging in their city’s 2SLGBTQ+ community were also apparent in survey results. Respondents who identified as Black (40%) or as other racialized (56%) were less likely to feel comfortable in 2SLGBTQ+ spaces than white (56%) respondents or Indigenous (73%) respondents.

Wall art in downtown Sudbury



3.2 Feelings of connection, support and change

Despite these challenges, many interview participants were optimistic that their cities were changing to become more accepting of 2SLGBTQ+ people. When asked what her thoughts were about living in Sudbury, one woman in her sixties described how she felt the community had changed over time to become more accepting:

“I like it. I think we’ve come far. I think we’re proactive and I like seeing a lot of diversity. So, I don’t feel quite so shut in, closeted, closed or something to this effect...” - S2 BISEXUAL WOMAN

Participants who were aware of, and had participated in, 2SLGBTQ activities, services, and events in their city often felt connected and boasted about the strengths of their small tight-knit communities:

“I’d say that Windsor is very unique, and we have a very strong LGBT community. We have a lot of start-ups like we have We Trans which is the first trans organization here.” - W10 NON-BINARY PERSON

“I think it’s probably getting better ... this year at the parade was fantastic I thought ‘well this is pretty freaking awesome.’ Like I was really impressed. Like it was a long parade for Windsor.”
- W15 NON-BINARY PERSON

“Normally I would say in any community, having a blue-collar mining town would definitely be something that would go against the LGBTQ community ... However, we’ve had advocacy here in the city from a lot of great people like [name of trans activist] is an example, who have very much educated and moved this city forward to be more understanding and accepting of LGBTQ people. I think that makes a huge difference on a lot of fronts.” - S1 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

Interview participants described the importance of feeling connected to Indigenous and Two-Spirit communities and to diversity within the 2SLGBTQ+ community. One Indigenous woman, who initially felt that she didn’t fit within Sudbury’s 2SLGBTQ+ community, described finding connection by building her own queer community and in Indigenous community activities:

“So as [a] queer person, in the beginning, I never really felt a part of the queer community because it was very limited to mostly gay and lesbian people but now, over time, I’ve developed a queer community for myself. Also, as an Indigenous person there’s a lot of good community things happening and places to go to like get better acquainted with my Indigenous heritage and learn more and participate in activities.”
- S20 QUEER PARTICIPANT

Not everyone in Windsor and Sudbury reported seeing changes to make their communities more accepting for 2SLGBTQ+ persons. When asked if Windsor has become a more welcoming city for 2SLGBTQ+ people than it was before, an older trans woman answered:

“To those that are ... passing, I pass. I can walk down the street and nobody will say ‘there goes a trans woman’ or honk! Honk! Honk! ... I never ever get that which pisses me off because I have this privilege of being a woman in this society but I’m a trans woman and other trans women don’t have that privilege that I have and whether the race they are or the age they are ... it’s just not fair I mean. You should be able to live who you are without you know this prejudice and hate.”
- W14 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

3.3 The push-pull of larger centres

Many 2SLGBTQ+ people in smaller communities aspire to move to a larger city to find greater acceptance, belonging, and self-actualization. Some respondents recounted previously moving or thinking about moving to Toronto. But most expressed the opinion that long-term relocation was not possible or desirable.

Respondents living in Sudbury often cited wanting to live close to nature, or be out of the ‘hustle’ of a larger centre. One Indigenous respondent emphasized the importance of nature and proximity to family.

“I grew up on Lake Huron and, you know, with all this kind of nature around me. I have a lot of cousins and aunts and uncles and my mom and dad... I really like the space here. It’s just where I feel comfortable.”
- S20 QUEER PARTICIPANT

One trans woman described the tension between the ability to “disappear into the crowd” that she would have in a larger centre and her desire to be out of the city. When asked if she had thought about moving to Toronto, she responded:

“Yeah, I have. Yeah, I think from a diversity and ability to be ... to disappear into the crowd. But for dealing with the crowd beyond that, like just a hustle and all that. No. I like both. Right. But in a small town it comes to small town mentality sometimes. Right. That whole isolation and not dealing with this kind of stuff. So if I was to go back to [small town]. How would it be? I don’t know. All right. That’s kind of a question, right? If I was to say I had to move back to [the small town]. Two-thousand-person town, middle of nowhere. How would I be. Yeah, that’s a tough one, right.”
- S19 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

While moving was a possibility for some, for others the higher cost of living in Toronto or needing support from friends and/or family, made moving impossible.

“So at this point in my life, I have a lot of student loans. I have to pay up and therefore I am living at home ... and like my job, you know, is good. So I don’t have an aspiration to move anywhere else in Canada until my student loans are like at least close to being paid off.”
- W20 LESBIAN WOMAN, 20S

“Right now ... I can’t go anywhere but also because all my support is here, like it’s not family but [community support groups] and the friends that I’ve made through them keeps me here.” - S16 TRANSGENDER MAN

CHAPTER 4

Where are people working and why are they working there?

This chapter describes what type of jobs and industries 2SLGBTQ+ interview respondents are working in and what factors influenced where they found jobs. Though 2SLGBTQ+ people work in all types of jobs, they are often clustered in feminized jobs which are characterized by greater representation of women and associated with femininity (e.g. care work). These jobs are often less well paid than jobs traditionally considered ‘masculine’ (e.g., mining). Additionally, since many workers sought out supportive employers and or faced discrimination in hiring or firing, the job options of most respondents were narrower than they would be for otherwise similar cisgender heterosexual workers.

4.1 Occupations and industries

The 2SLGBTQ+ people who participated in the survey were overrepresented in feminized jobs and sectors and underrepresented in industrial occupations, compared to the overall occupational profile for Sudbury and Windsor (Table 4.1). Correspondingly, 2SLGBTQ+ people were underrepresented in mining and manufacturing, industries that have provided high-paying jobs in both cities. Despite being a relatively high portion of our sample (13.1%), workers in health care and social assistance were not overrepresented compared to the actual population. The sample overrepresented workers in accommodation and food services (13.2%), arts, entertainment and recreation (8.5%), and education (18.6%).

Table 4.1: Survey respondents’ industry classification compared with the Labour force in 2016 in Windsor and Sudbury (Statistics Canada, 2017a; 2017b).

Industry	Windsor (sample)	Sudbury (sample)	Total (sample)	Windsor (StatsCan)	Sudbury (StatsCan)
Agriculture/forestry/fishing/hunting	1.1%	2.2%	1.8%	1.1%	0.6%
Mining/quarrying/oil/gas/extraction	0.8%	2.7%	1.9%	0.2%	8.0%
Utilities	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.6%
Construction	2.3%	4.2%	3.4%	5.1%	7.2%
Manufacturing	7.9%	1.7%	4.2%	19.9%	4.4%
Wholesale trade	0.4%	1.2%	0.9%	2.6%	3.2%
Retail trade	8.7%	7.7%	8.0%	10.4%	12.2%
Transportation and warehousing	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	4.1%	4.0%
Information and cultural industries	4.9%	4.0%	4.3%	1.1%	1.4%
Finance and insurance	4.1%	4.0%	4.0%	3.2%	2.6%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.5%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	1.6%
Professional/scientific/technical service	4.1%	2.5%	3.1%	5.0%	4.6%
Management of companies/enterprises	4.5%	2.2%	3.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Administration/Waste management services	5.3%	5.7%	5.5%	4.6%	4.2%
Educational services	20.7%	17.0%	18.6%	7.5%	8.3%
Health care and social assistance	8.7%	16.1%	13.1%	12.4%	14.4%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	9.8%	7.7%	8.5%	2.8%	1.6%
Accommodation and food services	13.2%	13.1%	13.2%	7.5%	7.1%
Other services	2.3%	4.4%	3.6%	3.9%	4.1%
Public administration	7.5%	12.1%	10.3%	3.7%	7.6%

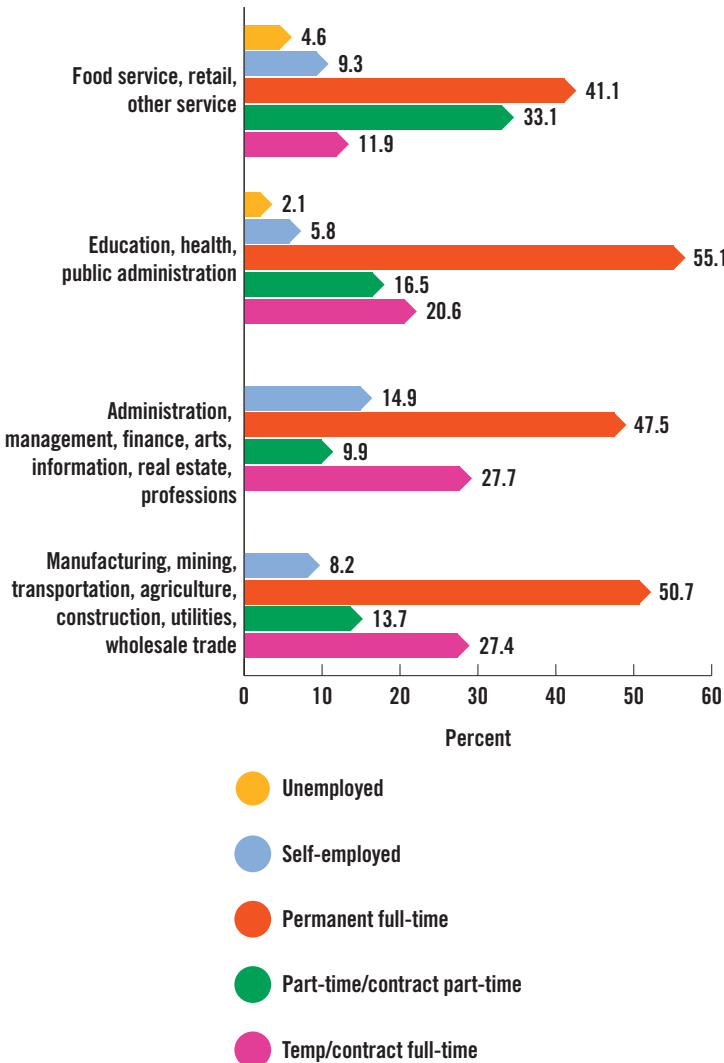


Approximately half of 2SLGBTQ+ people surveyed were in permanent full-time positions. The other half of respondents were employed in precarious forms of employment.

4.2 Job characteristics

Approximately half of 2SLGBTQ+ people surveyed were in permanent full-time positions. The other half of respondents were employed in precarious forms of employment (temporary full-time contracts, part-time contracts), self-employed, or unemployed. Respondents working in the education, health and public administration sectors were more likely to be working in permanent full-time jobs compared with those in food service, retail and other service sectors, who were often working part-time. However, employment in precarious forms of work existed across industry categories (Figure 4.2.1). Additionally, over half of respondents reported that their employment earnings sometimes (28.3%) or often/always (24.3%) had gone up and down month to month during the previous year.

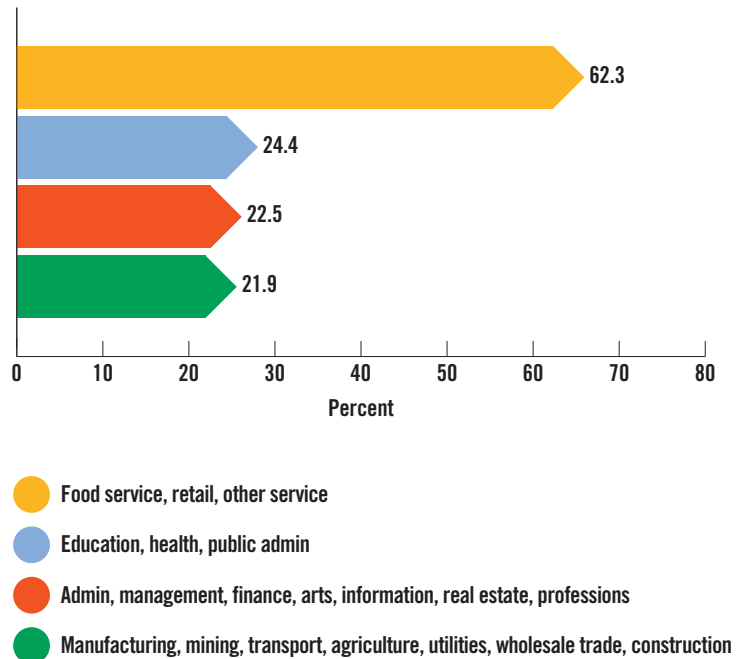
Figure 4.2.1: Work situation in current job by industry category. N(food service, etc.)=151, N(education, etc.)=243, N(admin, management, etc.)=141, N(manufacturing, etc.)=73. Pearson chi-square test, df=12, $\chi^2=56.3619$, $P = 0.000$.



Just under half (45.2%) of respondents were employed in workplaces with less than 30 people and only 30.4% worked in large workplaces of over 100 people. Approximately one fifth (22%) of survey respondents worked in two or more jobs and 63.8% of people did not have a pension or health and dental benefits from their employer.

Over one third (36.4%) of respondents made less than \$20,000 per year, and the distribution of low-income respondents varied by region, age, and industry. For both Windsor and Sudbury, 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents were more likely to have low income than the broader population: 41.0% of survey respondents in Windsor and 31% in Sudbury earned less than \$20,000 per year, compared to 31.0% and 28.4% for Windsor and Sudbury respectively according to Statistics Canada (2017a; 2017b). Low-income respondents were also more likely than higher-income respondents to be young adults and more likely to work in the service sector (see Figure 4.2.2). Among respondents less than 25 years old, 71.9% had low income, compared to 20.9% for those 25 years old and older ($P = 0.000$).

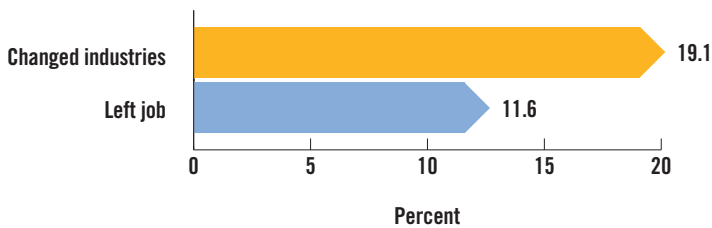
Figure 4.2.2: Percentage of survey respondents in different industries with an income lower than \$20,000 a year. N(manufacturing, mining, etc.)=73, N(admin, management, etc.)=142, N(education, health, etc.)=242, N(food service, retail, etc.)=151. Pearson chi-square test, df=3, $\chi^2=77.5865$, $P = 0.000$



4.3 Choosing supportive industries and workplaces

Not being heterosexual and/or cisgender affected what jobs people felt they were able to apply for, and whether they left a job because of harassment or feeling uncomfortable. 19.1% of survey respondents had contemplated changing industries or sectors to find a workplace that is more positive for 2SLGBTQ+ people and 11.6% of respondents had left a job because the workplace was not positive for 2SLGBTQ+ people (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Percentage of respondents who left a job in the region because the workplace was not positive for 2SLGBTQ+ workers, and who thought about changing industries or sectors to find a workplace that is more positive. N(changed industries)=623, N(left job)=627.



Specifically, several interview participants described choosing not to apply for jobs in fields that were male-dominated. One transgender man described how he would only apply for jobs in industrial sectors after he felt that he could pass as a man:

INTERVIEWER: *“Specifically what kinds of jobs would you hold back from at this point?”*

“Anything pretty much in the industrial field, so anything when it comes to like mining, industrial shops, factories, things of that nature. Definitely until I get top surgery is where I’m hoping to finally feel like I would be okay to apply and work in one of those fields but right now that’s definitely a mental barrier I have.” - S15 TRANSGENDER MAN

One man from Windsor expressed similar reservations about applying to work in the auto factories:

“I think [sexual orientation] definitely has [influenced my job choices], more in the way that I’ve avoided working in certain places, not applying to certain places ... Unfortunately for me it’s the factory. I do know some gay men who work in the factories who aren’t out and I’ve heard horror stories about it. Whether or not they may be true it’s just more I don’t want to put myself in a job where I may be putting my mental health or my physical health at risk. ... I wouldn’t even put the time and effort in to apply.” - W5 GAY MAN

Many interviewees described moving between jobs to find more supportive workplaces. In some cases, workers switched to jobs that were less secure or lower paid to access supervisors and coworkers who were more supportive of their sexual orientation or gender identity:

“...I had considered going back when I wasn’t getting a lot of hours at [the low-wage service job] and then I had already come out at that point and I was like ‘oh I have short hair now. It’s colored. People are going to ask questions ... ‘Cause sometimes I’m still like ‘you know what I was actually pretty good at that job. I could go back.’ And then I’m like ‘oh no ... I was the youngest person working there ... If I showed any sort of deviation from what their values were I was just the young whippersnapper who was the special snowflake kind of thing. Even when I told them, my coworkers, that I have a girlfriend, they were like ‘okay don’t talk about this.’” - S13 TRANSGENDER PRIVATE SECTOR MAN

4.4 Employer discrimination and the labour market

The success of 2SLGBTQ+ workers in finding work and the types of work they found were both influenced by employer discrimination. 13.5% of all survey respondents reported that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity had, at one point, been a barrier to finding work.

Survey respondents also feared that their sexual orientation or gender identity could lead to the loss of their jobs. Almost one quarter of all respondents (23.8%) and nearly half (46.4%, P=0.000) of transgender respondents said that they feared that coming out or transitioning at work would mean losing their jobs.

In the interviews, discriminatory hiring and firing were recounted as both a fear and a reality. Some participants questioned whether they would have been hired into their current job if they had not concealed aspects of their identity during the hiring process. For example, one non-binary worker chose to use binary pronouns during their interview, anticipating discrimination:

“[If] I say they/them pronouns down right off the bat. That could have been, like, ‘what? This is too much for me.’” - S23 NON-BINARY PERSON

Employer discrimination in candidate selection is often hidden from view. However, there were some cases where discrimination towards 2SLGBTQ+ job candidates was clearly apparent. After one interviewee applied for a low-wage service sector job, a friend of his who worked there told him that he was not hired because he was transgender:

“She said ‘they didn’t offer you an interview because you’re trans’ and I was really shocked at that” - S13 TRANSGENDER MAN

In another case, a bisexual woman became aware of a future employer’s homophobia in an interview and knew immediately that she would not be offered the job:

“I certainly had more experience than a couple of the younger fellows that were interviewing me in a wide range of experiences ... And there was a comment made that was kind of underhanded about my potential sexuality and I was like okay let’s just toast this interview” - W9 BISEXUAL WOMAN



Other workers suspected that they had lost their jobs because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. For one transgender man, coming out and transitioning at work was met with resistance and, ultimately, termination. After struggling with his employer to get his nametag changed—and experiencing great stress in the process—he was constructively dismissed:

“I mentally couldn’t handle working there and the situation wasn’t getting any better. They ended up cutting all of my hours. So it’s been stressful trying to get a new job.” - S16 TRANSGENDER MAN

As mentioned above, identifying discrimination in hiring and firing is not always clear. Often interviewees were unsure whether their identities played a role in being overlooked for a potential job or in being laid off or dismissed. One pansexual woman described the stress of not knowing whether she should have disclosed aspects of her identity, since she did not know if this led to her layoff:

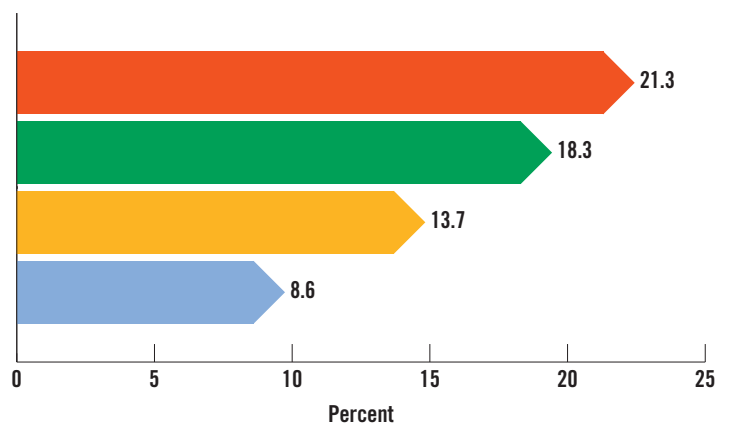
“I would say since the layoff I’ve just had a lot of doubts about how I... what I disclosed... how I communicated, that thinking regretfully that maybe I ended up causing my own lay off and trying to... I think emotionally feel since then a lot less safe about being out in any kind of work situation so even in terms of applying for work. It’s like, you know, how do I be me and... cause I just I can’t do the closet.” - W11 PANSEXUAL WOMAN

Here, the ambiguity of not knowing the effect that identity had on the stability of her employment led to feelings of not being safe to be ‘out’ at work.

Among survey respondents, 2SLGBTQ+ workers in some industries were more likely than others to experience discrimination in hiring. People who worked in private sector white-collar jobs, such as management and finance, reported the highest rates of hiring discrimination (21.3%), followed by

blue-collar jobs like manufacturing and mining (18.3%), and food service and retail jobs (13.7%). Workers in the public sector, which includes education and health care, were the least likely to report having been discriminated against in the hiring process (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Percent of respondents who reported experiencing discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation as a barrier to finding work, by industry. N(manufacturing, etc.)=71, N(admin, management, etc.)=141, N(education, etc.)=243, N(food service, etc.)=153. Pearson chi-square test, df=6, $\chi^2=18.3239$, $P = 0.005$.



- Admin, management, finance, arts, information, real estate, professions
- Manufacturing, mining, transport, agriculture, utilities, wholesale trade, construction
- Food service, retail, other service
- Education, health, public admin

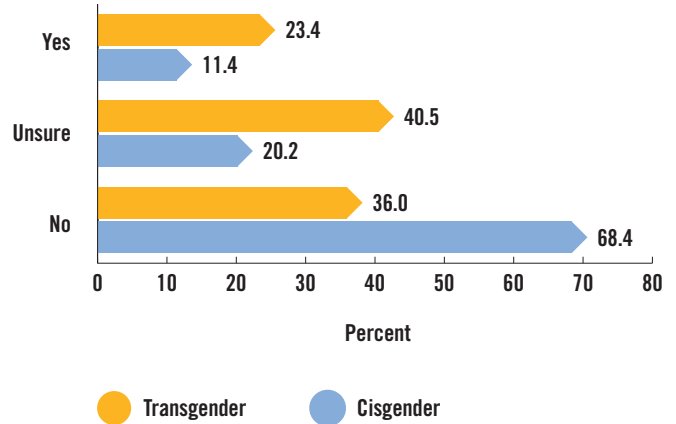
Box 4.1: Transgender workers in the labour market

Transgender workers were particularly vulnerable to labour market discrimination. Transgender workers were more likely than cisgender respondents to report having left a job because of an unsupportive workplace (24.3% vs 9.1%, $P=0.000$) and were also more likely to have contemplated changing industries or sectors to find a more positive workplace for 2SLGBTQ+ workers (36.5% vs 15.2%, $P=0.000$).

Survey respondents who were transgender were also much more likely to report that they had faced discrimination in trying to find work; almost one quarter reported having faced discrimination, and more than one third reported being unsure whether they face discrimination (Figure 4.4.1). Racialized respondents were also more likely to identify discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity as a barrier to finding work (24.4% compared to 9.6% of white participants, $P=0.000$).

The effects of labour market discrimination were also apparent in other labour market statistics. People who were transgender were more likely to be unemployed (9.3% vs 2.0%), more likely to be working part-time (23.2% vs 17.0%), and less likely to be employed full-time than people who were cisgender (38.9% vs 50.7%, $P = 0.001$). Unsurprisingly, transgender workers were also significantly more likely have a personal income under \$20,000 compared with cisgender respondents (54.0% vs 32.2%, $P=0.000$).

Figure 4.4.1: Percent of respondents who experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity as a barrier to getting work, by gender identity. $N(\text{cisgender})=500$, $N(\text{transgender})=111$. Pearson chi-square test, $df=2$, $\chi^2=17.9214$, $P = 0.000$.





CHAPTER 5

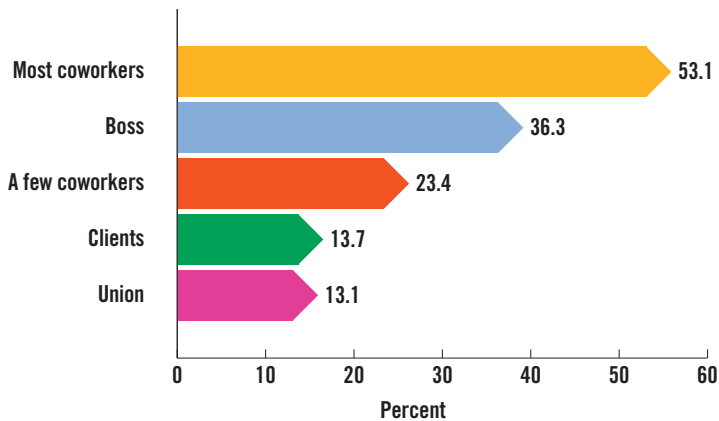
Experiences at work

Most of the 2SLGBTQ+ people who participated in the study did not feel completely safe and comfortable at work. Work was also a source of overt discrimination and harassment for a significant number of respondents. More commonly, respondents experienced a sense of marginalization and discomfort due to subtle forms of exclusion, the absence of other out 2SLGBTQ+ people, and/or a lack of vocal support from employers and unions at their workplace. This chapter describes how homophobia, transphobia and racism affected people’s comfort and wellbeing in the workplace.

5.1 Comfort at work and ‘outness’

Many people did not feel comfortable expressing their sexual orientation or gender identity at work, and the fear that knowledge of their gender identity or sexual orientation would have negative repercussions drove many respondents to conceal their identity at work. Approximately half (50.6%) of survey respondents concealed their identity from either supervisors, coworkers, or during teamwork or work events, and only 36.3% of workers were out to their boss or supervisor (Figure 5.1.1).

Figure 5.1.1: Percent of respondents who were out to different groups in their current job. ‘Most coworkers’ and ‘a few coworkers’ are mutually exclusive categories. N=672.

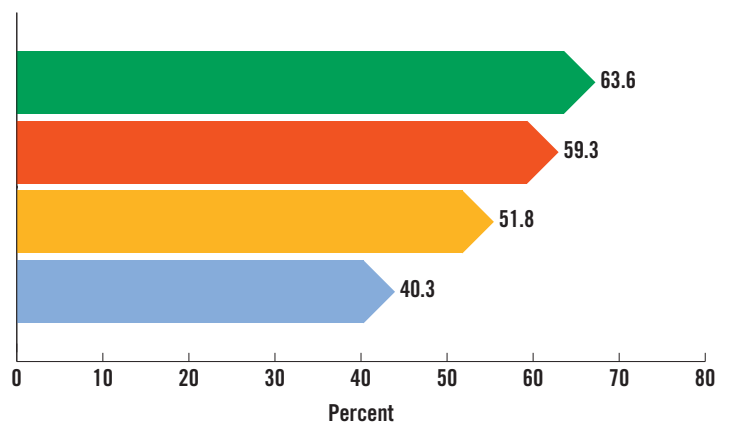


Even those who are out at work do not always feel comfortable at their workplace. Some people, such as a transgender man who passes or a cisgender woman who is not visibly queer, can hide their identity. Others cannot. Non-normative gender mannerisms and presentation may make it especially difficult for many people to conceal their identity.

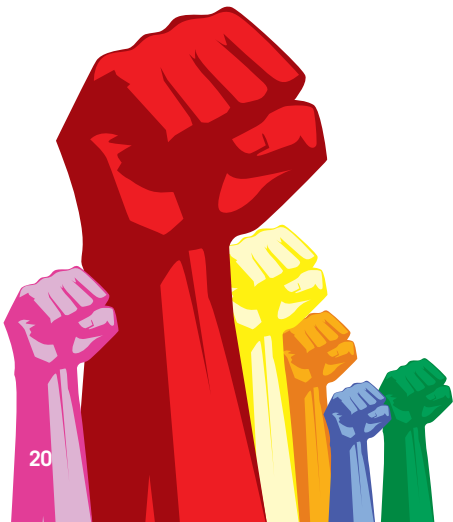
Demographic factors that affected whether people concealed their identity at work included racialization and age. Nearly two thirds (62.8%) of racialized respondents concealed their identity at work from either supervisors or coworkers, or during teamwork or work events, compared to 45.4% of white respondents (P=0.001). Younger people less than 35 years old were also more likely to conceal their identity relative to older workers (58.8% vs 28.1% for 35 and older, P=0.000).

Rates of concealment also varied by industry. Respondents in blue-collar industries, which include manufacturing and mining, reported the highest rates of concealment, followed by respondents in private sector white-collar jobs such as administration and management. Respondents in education, health care, and public administration were the least likely to report concealing their identity at work (see Figure 5.1.2).

Figure 5.1.2: Percent of respondents who concealed their gender identity and/or sexual orientation to either supervisors, coworkers, or during teamwork or work events, by industry category. N(food service, etc.)=110, N(education, etc.)=191, N(administration, etc.)=113, N(manufacturing, etc.)=66. Pearson chi-square test, df=3, x2=16.0522, P = 0.001.



- Manufacturing, mining, transport, agriculture, utilities, wholesale trade, construction
- Admin, management, finance, arts, information, real estate, professions
- Food service, retail, other service
- Education, health, public admin





Three interview participants in male-dominated workplaces described why they were not out by citing feelings of discomfort and unsafety. For one gay man, the discriminatory views shared by his coworkers prevented him from feeling comfortable sharing his sexual orientation:

INTERVIEWER: *“Would you say that you feel comfortable there?”*

“Um, most of the time I do. There’s definitely times where I feel uncomfortable just because it’s... I just don’t feel comfortable dealing with racists and bigoted ideas and people ... my sexual orientation doesn’t come into contact with my job at all, but that’s mostly just my choice of whether or not to come out at different times. Like in the past I might have come out in earlier jobs but I don’t think I’d come out during [my construction job]. That’s just kind of insane.” - S10 GAY MAN

For a queer woman, similar attitudes from coworkers and regressive ideas around gender prevented her from feeling safe to come out:

“There was discrimination, like it was a blue-collar kind of environment and like it was like they were stuck 50 years behind with gender. Yeah it just didn’t feel safe.” - S20 QUEER PARTICIPANT

While unionized survey respondents were slightly less likely to conceal their identity at work than their non-union counterparts, this difference was not significant (47.2% union vs 52.9% non-union, $P=0.215$). Among unionized workers, however, differences emerged based on sector. Whereas 61.4% of unionized workers in the private sector concealed their identity at work, only 35.9% of public sector union members did the same ($P=0.000$).

Workers who felt that their employer supported people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ were far less likely to conceal their identity at work. 82.8% of workers in unsupportive work environments concealed their identity, compared to just 43.5% of workers in supportive environments ($P=0.000$).

5.2 Discrimination at work: dress codes and bathrooms

Dress codes and bathrooms often follow traditional gender roles and therefore are discriminatory towards 2SLGBTQ+ workers. 39.2% of survey respondents sometimes, often, or always changed their appearance at work to ‘fit in’—a number that rose to 46.2% for transgender respondents (P=0.000). Interview participants explained how dress codes encouraged adherence to normative gender presentation. For a transgender man in retail, this included pressures to wear makeup, including from management who once told him “you’re supposed to be wearing mascara”:

“An interesting thing about the retail I work at is the dress code. A lot of people consider it to be a little restrictive and I’m only mentioning this because it does conform to traditional gender roles. So women have to be wearing ... make-up products on their face” - S13 TRANSGENDER MAN

In addition to dictating what workers *should* wear, dress codes also discouraged certain types of expression. After explaining the strict uniform guidelines detailed in her employer’s dress code, one cisgender pansexual woman explained the unwritten rule about queer-specific hair dye and piercings:

“You could but shouldn’t, like they liked you less if you did. You know you weren’t seen as the same level of professionalism as the other people if you were different like that.” - S7 PANSEXUAL WOMAN

Being denied access to a gender-appropriate bathroom was a serious form of discrimination for transgender participants and cisgender participants who had non-normative gender expressions. One transgender man was put in the woman’s change room for a week before his employer rectified the situation:

“[My manager] stuck me in the women’s dry without knowing.”

INTERVIEWER: *“He stuck you in the woman’s with the women?”*

“The woman’s dry is the change room. So I mean the women’s change room and for a week I tolerated it.” - S18 TRANSGENDER MAN

For another transgender man, management barred him from using the men’s restroom after customers complained:

“I’ve had people complain to my boss about me using the men’s bathroom to the point where I’m only allowed to use the official staff bathroom, because there’s been too many complaints.” - S4 TRANSGENDER MAN

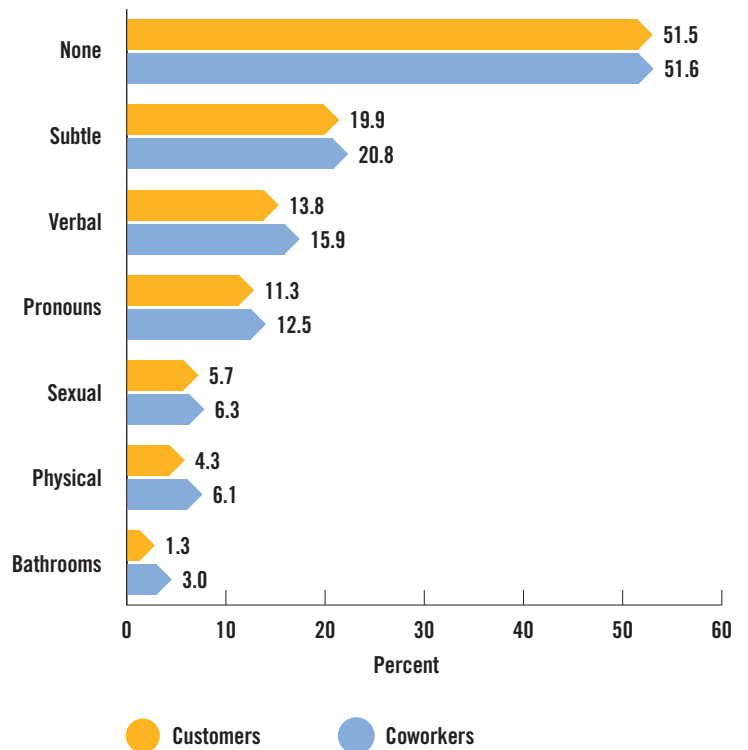
Coworkers were also a source of bathroom discrimination for 3% of all survey respondents and 6% of transgender survey respondents (P=0.035). For one cisgender lesbian woman, this meant being told she did not belong in the woman’s change room by a coworker:

“One [time] in particular I was asked by a [coworker] to leave the women’s change room because I didn’t belong there ... it was pretty awful to have to experience that.” - S12 LESBIAN WOMAN

5.3 Homophobia and transphobia at work

Lifetime experience of subtle or overt homophobia or transphobia from coworkers or customers was experienced by 61.7% of the workers who participated in the study. Subtle forms of exclusion, such as avoidance or eye-rolling, followed by verbal harassment and bullying, were the most common types of discrimination from current coworkers and customers reported by respondents. (Figure 5.3.1). Not respecting gender pronouns was the third most common form of discrimination and disproportionately affected transgender participants, 29.3% of whom had experienced it from coworkers and 24.1% from customers.

Figure 5.3.1: Percent of respondents who experienced different types of discrimination from customers and coworkers, based on sexual orientation or gender identity, in their current job. Respondents could select multiple options. N=672.



When asked whether they had ever felt stress at work because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, one non-binary worker explained how subtle acts of exclusion, like avoidance, made them feel targeted based on their non-conformity:

“I don’t know if people picked up on anything or what but there was times when people felt like they were avoiding me and I could never understand why and I have a feeling that like maybe [it was] partly the gender non-conformity and maybe they were just able to pick up on something that I wasn’t accepting about myself at the time.” - W2 NON-BINARY WORKER



A cisgender lesbian woman described how her employer gave her subtle cues during conversations that communicated disapproval with her being publicly out:

“They didn’t ever do anything that would punish me or affect my work but they were also very uncomfortable with the fact that I was very open. They were okay with me being gay as long as I didn’t talk about it to them.”

INTERVIEWER: *“Did you feel this discomfort through actions or spoken words?”*

“It was during conversations when the awkward laughter when someone would talk about their spouse and I would say something about mine it was like ‘haha we don’t want to talk about that.’ Just that sort of... just the tone.” - S12 LESBIAN WOMAN

Other forms of disapproval were more direct. Nearly a third (32.6%) of survey respondents reported facing verbal harassment at work from coworkers at some point in their work lives, and 24.7% had experienced the same from customers. For one cisgender bisexual woman, the harassment occurred after a coworker found out about her sexual orientation:

“I always feel like I have to hide or choose what I’m going to show to people. ... there’s this one guy working there and he liked me and I was his friend ... and then he found out that I preferred women and he flipped. He started like calling me all sorts of names and like telling everybody that I’m a this and a that and every time I saw him he would crack nasty jokes so that was not fun.” - W3 BISEXUAL WOMAN

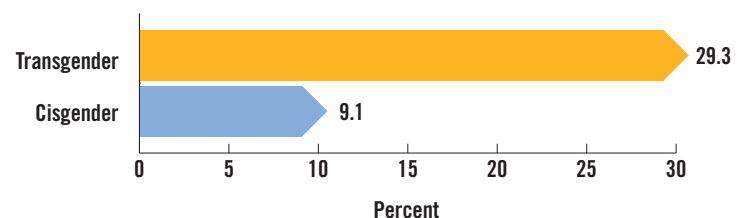
Many participants, particularly those who were transgender or non-binary, experienced discrimination related to being misgendered at work. Approximately a third (29.3%) of transgender and 10% of cisgender respondents reported discrimination related to pronouns by coworkers in their current job (Figure 5.3.2). In some cases, the refusal to use correct pronouns was overt and hostile. Customers were often the perpetrators of harassment for service workers:

“I’ve actually had a customer who told management that she would never be back unless I was fired because I stood firm whenever she would call me ‘she.’ I’m like, ‘he’.” - S4 TRANSGENDER MAN

In other cases, pronoun discrimination was more subtle:

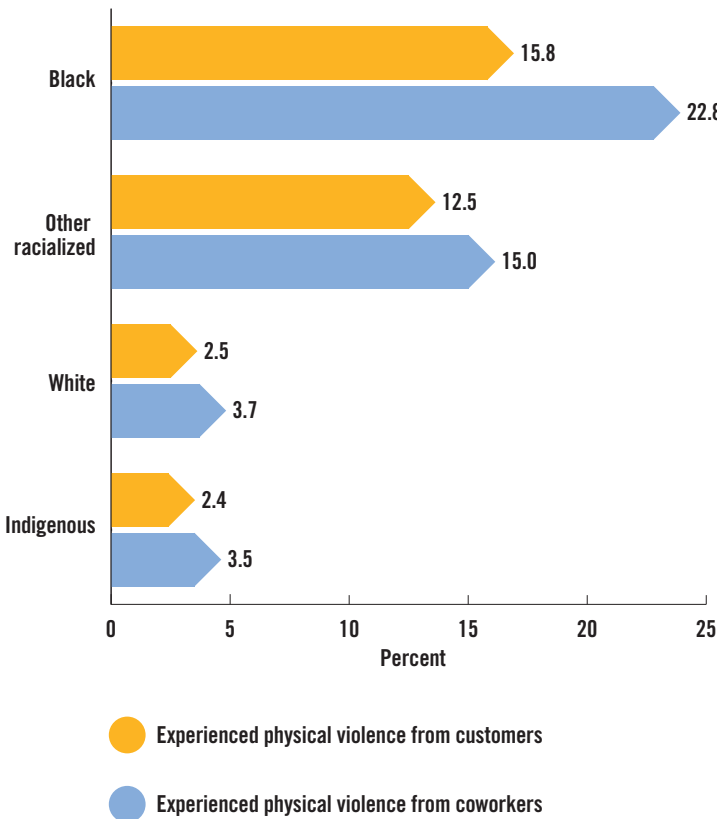
“I did notice that every time our boss came to visit, which would be like once or twice a week, he would ignore using pronouns when referring to me. He would just call me [my name] over and over and over again.” - W22 TRANSGENDER MAN

Figure 5.3.2: Percent of respondents who have experienced pronoun discrimination from coworkers in their current job, by gender identity. N(transgender)=116, N(cisgender)=515. Pearson chi-square test, df=1, $\chi^2=34.4720$, $P = 0.000$.



In extreme but not uncommon cases, discrimination from coworkers and customers resulted in sexual harassment and physical violence against 2SLGBTQ+ workers. Experiences of physical and sexual violence varied significantly by ethnicity: One in five Black survey respondents reported physical violence from coworkers, compared to only approximately 4% of white respondents who said the same (Figure 5.3.3). For sexual harassment, Black and other racialized respondents reported the highest rates (15.8% and 17.5% respectively), compared to 4.8% for white and 3.5% for Indigenous respondents.

Figure 5.3.3: Percent of respondents who experienced physical violence from customers and coworkers based on sexual orientation or gender identity, by ethnicity. N(Black)=57, N(other racialized)=40, N(Indigenous)=85, N(white)=481. Pearson chi-square tests were conducted for both customers and coworkers. Customers: df=3, $\chi^2=39.3552$, $P = 0.000$. Coworkers: df=3, $\chi^2=29.9140$, $P = 0.000$.



While experiences of sexual harassment and physical violence from coworkers were uncommon among interview participants, several participants were verbally and sometimes physically harassed by managers and customers. One cisgender woman described a situation where her boss made inappropriate advances that included touching:

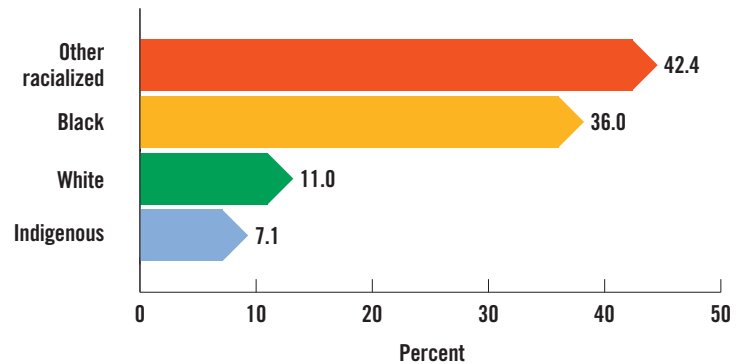
“There would be small sexual advances on his part, very subtle ... occasionally I would get a back rub or a text that says, ‘hey great to see you let loose last night. You looked really pretty in your dress by the way.’”
 - S5 BISEXUAL WOMAN

For a transgender man who also worked in customer service, sexual harassment from customers included physical violence:

“I had a group of teenage boys come in and start harassing me one time and one of them slapped me on the butt.” - S13 TRANSGENDER MAN

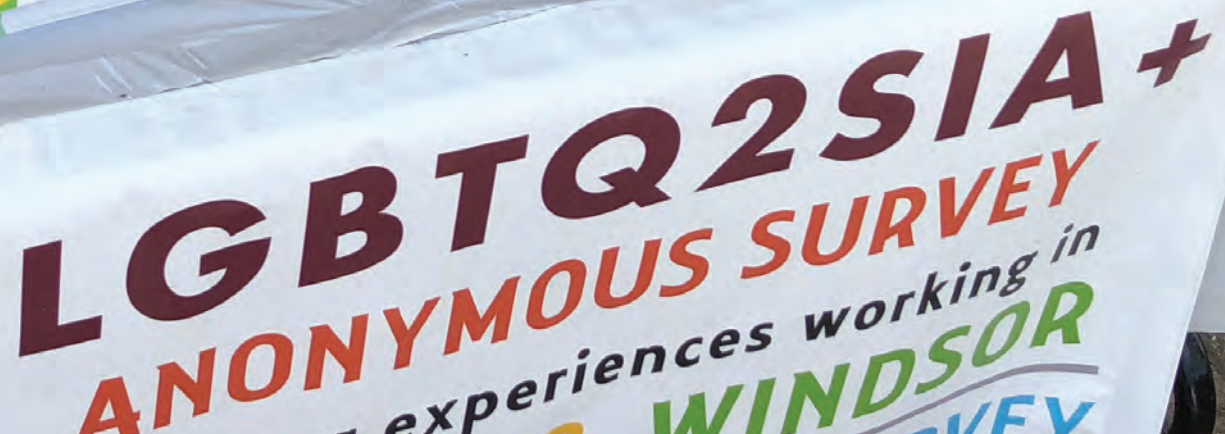
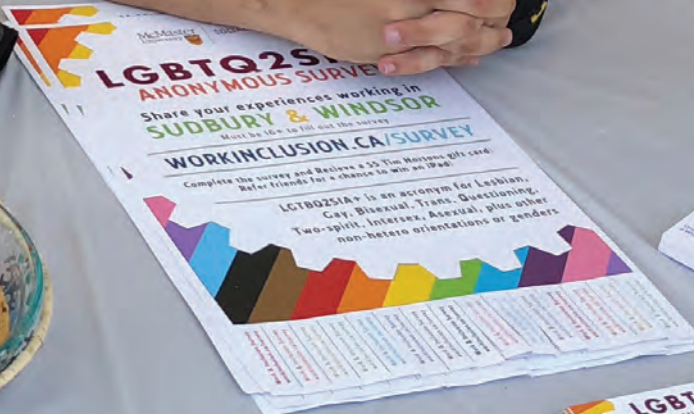
A significant number (14.7%) of survey respondents also felt that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity often or always prevented them from being promoted in their current job (Figure 5.3.4). Racialized respondents were also significantly more likely to report this form of discrimination.

Figure 5.3.4: Percent of respondents reporting that they ‘often’ or ‘always’ felt that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity prevented them from advancing in their current job, by ethnicity. N(other racialized)=33, N(Indigenous)=70, N(Black)=50, N(white)=390. Pearson chi-square test, df=6, $\chi^2=57.1335$, $P = 0.000$.



While some participants concealed their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to avoid discrimination, their strategies were not always effective. According to survey respondents, being ‘out’ at work had no significant effect on whether they experienced discrimination from coworkers, although respondents who were not ‘out’ at work were less likely to experience discrimination from customers (44.9% of ‘out’ respondents experienced customer discrimination vs 26.2% of those not ‘out’ $P=0.018$).

Overall, though not all 2SLGBTQ+ workers had experienced homophobia, transphobia or racism at work, the experience was relatively common and most 2SLGBTQ+ people experienced some discomfort at work. Discrimination disproportionately affected racialized and transgender respondents, and respondents with gender expressions that were not aligned with their gender ascribed at birth.



CHAPTER 6

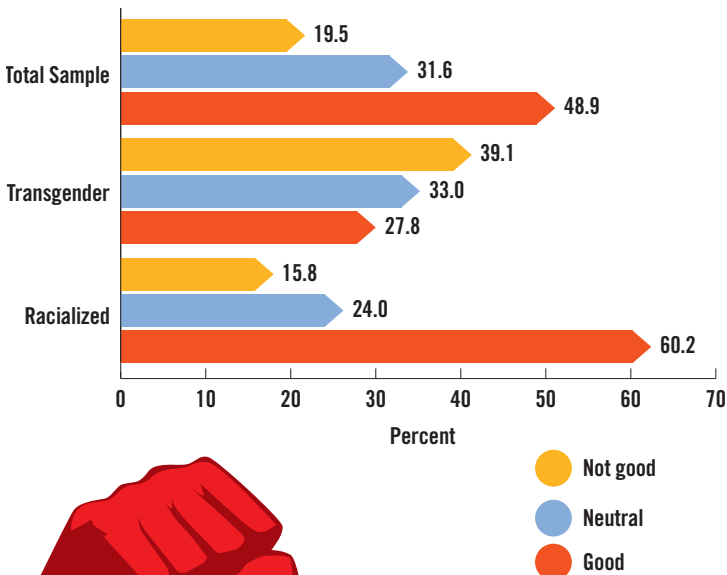
Mental health

2SLGBTQ+ people often experience higher rates of anxiety and depression than cisgender heterosexual people due to stigma, harassment and isolation (Conron et al., 2010; Rotondi et al., 2012). Transgender and bisexual people are both the most likely to have poor mental health and the least likely receive treatment (Steele et al., 2017). Results from our survey confirm this general trend, while highlighting the role of the workplace in fostering good mental health.

6.1 Self-reported mental and physical health

When asked to rate their mental health in general, approximately half of survey respondents reported their mental health as ‘good’ (Figure 6.1). Transgender respondents were more likely to report mental health that was ‘not good’, and racialized respondents reported higher rates of ‘good’ mental health than the total sample (60.2%). Cisgender respondents who were pansexual or bisexual had significantly lower rates of ‘good’ mental health (34.2%) compared to their lesbian, gay, and queer counterparts (61.0%, 59.0%, and 46.7% respectively P=0.000).

Figure 6.1: Percent of respondents with ‘good’, ‘neutral’, and ‘not good’ general mental health, by total sample, transgender respondents, and racialized respondents. N(total sample)=662, N(transgender)=115, N(racialized)=171.

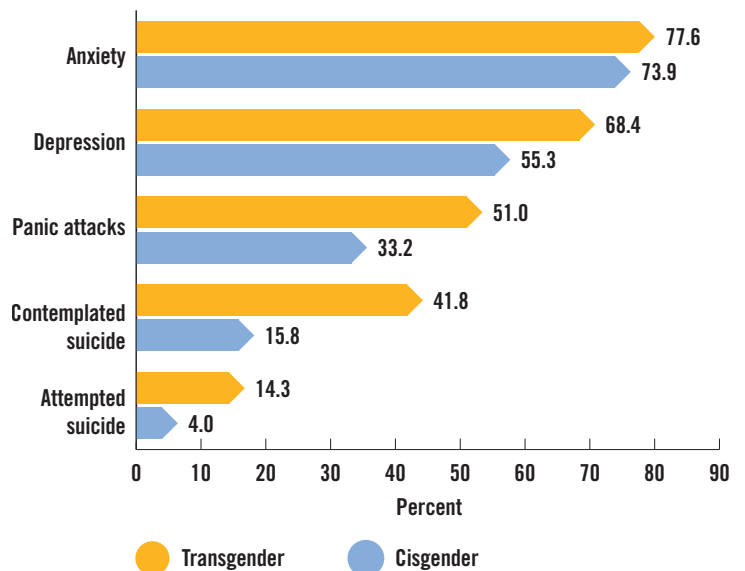


Survey respondents were more likely to report good physical health (67.9%) than good mental health (48%). Disparities persisted, however: transgender respondents were less likely to rate their physical health as ‘good’ compared with cisgender respondents (55.2% vs 70.5%, P=0.004).

6.2 Work and mental health

Work is critical to the mental health and wellbeing of all workers. For 2SLGBTQ+ workers, everyday work stress may be compounded by stress related to being a sexual- or gender-minority person. 72.6% of survey respondents experienced a mental health issue related to their work over the past year. Among these respondents, anxiety and depression were the most common work-related mental health issues, followed by panic attacks, contemplating suicide, and attempting suicide. Transgender respondents were more likely to experience each of these mental health issues due to their work compared to those who identified as cisgender (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Percent of respondents who experienced mental health issues related to their work or workplace over the past year, by gender identity. N(cisgender)=349, N(transgender)=98. Pearson chi-square tests were conducted for each mental health issue. Attempted suicide: df=1, $\chi^2=13.7559$, P = 0.000. Contemplated suicide: df=1, $\chi^2=30.8539$, P = 0.000. Panic attacks: df=1, $\chi^2= 10.3642$, P = 0.001. Depression: df=1, $\chi^2=5.3686$, P = 0.021. Anxiety: df=1, $\chi^2=0.5324$, P = 0.466.

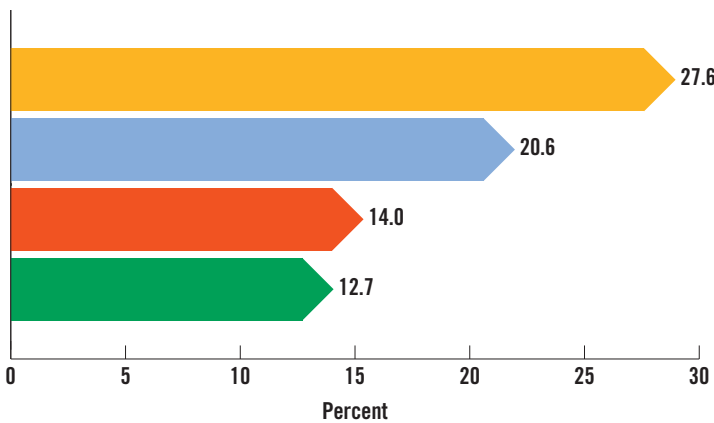


Accordingly, approximately two thirds of our interview participants connected their experiences at work to negative mental health outcomes, and another several explained how work positively impacted their mental health. In some cases, work stress was a result of working in stressful and/or unstable jobs while in others it was connected to working in an environment that was not supportive or affirming of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Coping with work stress often led study participants to use licit and illicit substances.

6.2.1 Workplace characteristics

2SLGBTQ+ workers are often overrepresented in public sector work and in precarious and low-waged work, in comparison with cisgender heterosexual men (Waite et al., in press). In our sample, workers in these types of work were also most likely to experience mental health issues related to work. Low-waged service work, which is often highly precarious, had the highest rates of work-related mental health issues, followed by public sector work in education, health and public administration (see Figure 6.2.1.1).

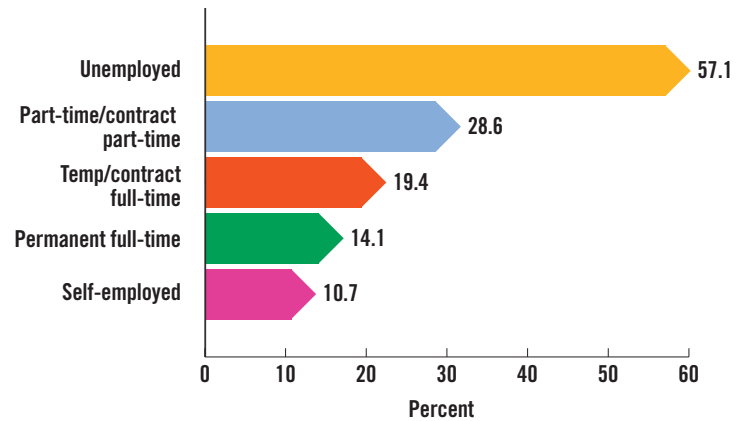
Figure 6.2.1.1: Percent of respondents who experienced mental health issues related to work ‘often’ or ‘always’. N(food service, etc.)=156, N(education, etc.)=243, N(administration, etc.)=143, N(manufacturing, etc.)=71. Pearson chi-square test, df=6, $\chi^2=23.4727$, $P = 0.001$.



- Food service, retail, other service
- Education, health, public admin
- Admin, management, finance, arts, information, real estate, professions
- Manufacturing, mining, transport, agriculture, utilities, wholesale trade, construction

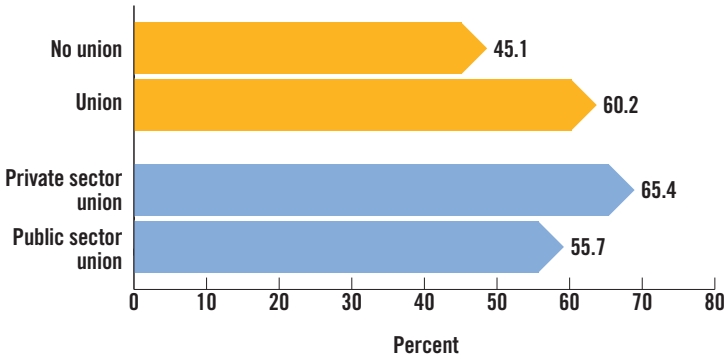
Additionally, unstable work situations, such as contract or casual employment, can heighten stress for workers across sectors and regardless of income (Lewchuk et al., 2015). Survey results confirmed this trend. 2SLGBTQ+ workers in precarious work situations, including part-time, contract part-time, and temporary/contract full-time were more likely to rate their mental health as ‘not good’ than workers in permanent full-time work (see Figure 6.2.1.2). Other indicators of precariousness were also related to poor mental health. Respondents who reported that their employment earnings fluctuated (often or always) from month to month in the previous year were more likely to report ‘not good’ mental health than those whose earnings fluctuated rarely or never (30.5% compared to 18%, $P=0.000$). Additionally, those who earned under \$20,000 in the last year were more likely to report ‘not good’ mental health than those who earned over \$20,000 (33.9% compared to 10.9% $P=0.000$).

Figure 6.2.1.2: Percent of respondents who rated their mental health as ‘not good’, by work situation. N(unemployed)=21, N(self-employed)=56, N(permanent full-time)=305, N(part-time/contract part-time)=119, N(temporary/contract full-time)=134. Pearson chi-square test, df=8, $\chi^2=44.9267$, $P = 0.000$.



By bargaining for better wages, hours, and working conditions and protecting their members from indiscriminate firing, unions act as a safeguard against precarious work. Respondents who were union members were more likely to report ‘good’ mental health than those who were not members of a union. Additionally, private-sector union members were more likely to report ‘good’ mental health than public-sector union members, although this finding was statistically insignificant (Figure 6.2.1.3)

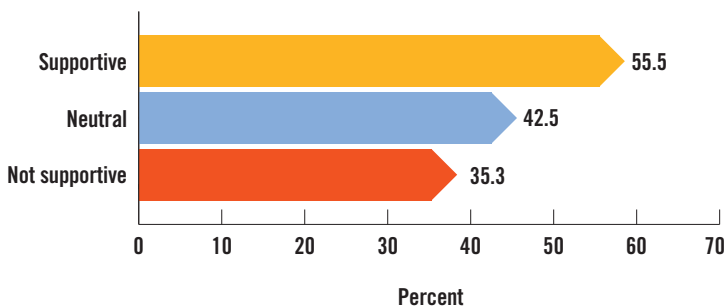
Figure 6.2.1.3: Percent of respondents who rated their mental health as ‘good’, by union membership for whole sample and by sector for unionized sample. N(no union)=384, N(union)=241, N(private sector union)=107, N(public sector union)=131. Pearson chi-square tests were conducted for both samples. Whole sample: df=2, $\chi^2=13.5879$, $P = 0.001$. Unionized sample: df=2, $\chi^2=2.3813$, $P = 0.304$.



6.2.2 2SLGBTQ+ identity and work

A work environment that supported their gender identity or sexual orientation affected the mental health of the 2SLGBTQ+ workers who participated in the survey. Respondents who described their workplaces as supportive were more likely to have good overall mental health than those who described their workplaces as unsupportive (54.4% vs 39.0%, $P=0.018$). Similarly, more than half of respondents who said that their workplace was supportive of the way they present or express their gender identity had good overall mental health, compared to just 35.3% of respondents whose workplaces were unsupportive (Figure 6.2.2).

Figure 6.2.2: Percent of respondents who rated their mental health as ‘good’, by how supportive their workplace was toward the way they express or present their gender. N(supportive)=431, N(neutral)=127, N(not supportive)=68. Pearson chi-square test, df=4, $\chi^2=16.2726$, $P = 0.003$.



Respondents linked stress at work to direct experiences of discrimination as well as to a fear of being treated differently. Several respondents working in male-dominated work environments described feeling stress related to not fitting in or fear of disclosing their identity. One transgender woman explained:

“You know, some I guess [is] just the general stress of being a trans woman in a male-dominated workforce, I guess just as a general weighing on you ... Just you know what it’s like, you know, any weight you carry for a long time.” - S19 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

Several respondents working in male-dominated workplaces described having anxiety related to not being ‘out’ at work and the fear of having their identity revealed. A transgender woman described how she experienced depression and anxiety before she came out, and volunteered for jobs she was not comfortable doing to better ‘fit in’—something that was ultimately damaging to her mental health:

“Because I wasn’t out for years at work, yes, definitely depression and panic situations occurred during those times ... I experienced, at work, some panic situations. I had to go and get medication for it. And I think because of all those occurrences, in hindsight it was because of my gender dysphoria at the time ... I was trying to be this masculine person ... I was depressed at work.” - W14 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

Another participant working in a male-dominated profession described being fearful when thinking about having his sexual orientation revealed:

“I can’t speak for everybody but for me the stress is always ‘how are my coworkers going to respond when they find out I’m gay?’ ... There is always that moment [where I fear that] they are not going to like me because I’m gay ... I want this person to be my friend. What’s gonna happen when I say ‘husband?’” - W21 GAY MAN

Survey responses revealed similar trends. Respondents who were not comfortable being fully ‘out’ at work were more likely to experience mental health issues related to work either sometimes, often, or always when compared to those who were fully ‘out’ (63.9% vs 40.2%).

For workers in retail, it was often the behaviour of coworkers or customers that contributed to a work environment detrimental to mental health. After sharing an instance of harassment where they were called a derogatory name by a coworker, a non-binary worker described:

“You go up in the break room and he and a bunch of the other guys are sitting there talking about Donald Trump and they love Donald Trump and it’s like sometimes you do feel kind of unsafe with certain colleagues. It got to the point where I don’t even eat in the break room anymore like I’ll go downstairs and eat outside cause I was like ‘I don’t want to listen to this anymore.’ It’s draining me mentally.” - W4 NON-BINARY WORKER

While unsupportive work environments negatively affected the mental health of 2SLGBTQ+ workers, seven participants discussed how their work improved their mental health, with some attributing this to a positive and accepting work environment.

“Mental health wise, I’ve found that it’s been helpful being around like people every day with a smile. There’s a culture, something that’s really great.” - S23 NON-BINARY WORKER



"Yeah, work is one of those things where I can get out of bed knowing that I'm going somewhere where I'm already accepted so it makes it a lot easier." - S9 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

6.3 Coping strategies

To cope with mental health stressors, 2SLGBTQ+ workers in the study took mental health leaves from work, sought out mental health supports and, in some cases, used substances to manage their mood and to mentally escape. Mental health leaves were common among interview participants who had employee health benefits: over a third of the interview sample talked about taking time off for stress, or had considered taking time off. Of this third, 70% were currently union members. One participant talked about the benefits of easily accessible mental health leave:

"the management that I work with are very understanding of like needing time for mental health and needing time for sickness and not giving me too much hassle about things so it's been great regarding that cause it is, it can be, a very stressful environment when like just working [in this type of job] that it's just stressful in general." - W5 GAY MAN

Not all participants had access to paid or unpaid leaves, and leaves were most common among workers who were unionized and/or employed in the public sector. One service worker in a non-unionized workplace discussed how their employer was inflexible when it came to accommodating even a sick-day:

"I remember at my first [service] job I was having a bad mental health day and they said someone else already called out so you have to come in." - W10 NON-BINARY WORKER

Another participant who worked in a unionized private-sector job mentioned that, even when mental health leave was available, the pay cut that accompanied the leave could be prohibitive. When asked whether she had ever taken leave due to stress related to her gender identity, she said:

"No. And the reason for that is because of our stress pay, like to be off, like half of what I normally make. I can't survive on it. Yeah. So that in itself is something else that companies in the cities can be a lot more attentive to." - S19 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

Several participants discussed getting mental health supports, such as therapy and medication, to cope with mental health issues. Due to cost and demand, however, these supports were not accessible to everyone. A participant who worked in the public sector explained how the cost, combined with difficulty finding a provider, made therapy inaccessible:

"Therapy is like over \$100 a session depending on who you're seeing and whatnot. So it can add up when you're going every week ... I had gone away for a little bit like I had taken a vacation. And when I came back ... she was booked up. So I thought, okay, like we got to the point where I felt like I look in the phone book and call another person kind of thing. And I remember I left a message for like three different therapists that were left online and found their information. And I never heard back from a single one of them. And I think that that's just a huge problem." - W20 LESBIAN WOMAN

Finally, some interview participants discussed using substances, especially alcohol and marijuana, as a coping mechanism during periods of poor mental health. Speaking about her recovery after a traumatic event at work, one public sector worker talked about increasing her alcohol usage:

"Well I went off work. Not great behaviors beforehand. No sleeping. I wouldn't say excessive alcohol but definitely an increase in alcohol. I isolated myself." - S12 LESBIAN WOMAN

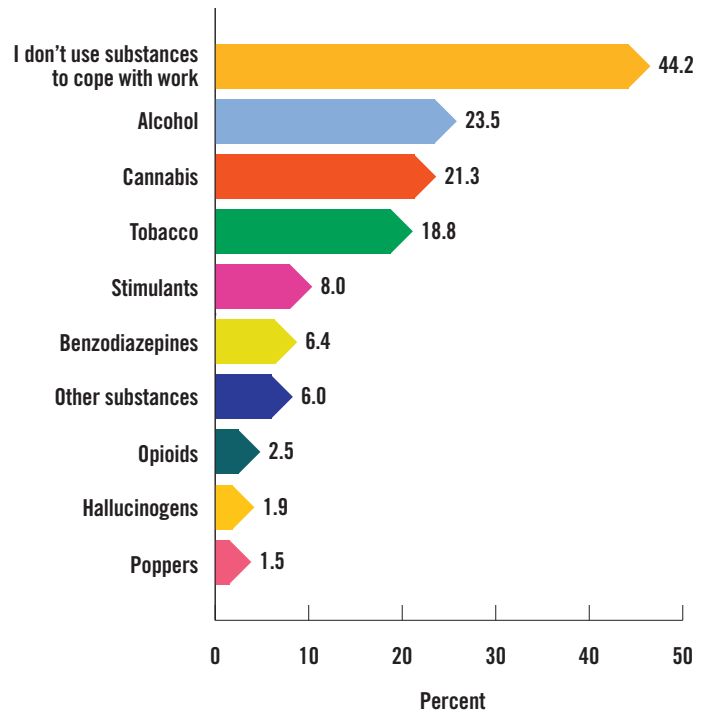
For another participant, the intersection of personal mental health issues and stress from work led them to drink to help them ‘escape’:

“Instead of dealing with it, for a little while prior to, I was probably drinking a little excessively because that was my escapism, before I kind of like got on track and did what I had to do.” - W15 NON-BINARY WORKER

Survey data revealed a broader range of substances respondents used to cope with their work and/or workplace. While nearly half (44.2%) of respondents used no substances to cope with work, substances including alcohol (23.5%), cannabis (21.3%), and tobacco (18.8%) were common. Stimulants, which include cocaine and amphetamines, among other drugs, were used by 8% of survey respondents to cope with work (Figure 6.3). We did not ask if licit drugs were prescribed or being used as prescribed.



Figure 6.3: Percent of respondents who used the following substances to cope with their work or workplace. Stimulants includes amphetamines, cocaine, crack cocaine, crystal meth, and ecstasy. Opioids includes fentanyl, heroin, and morphine. Hallucinogens includes ketamine and LSD. Other substances includes participants who use drugs that were not listed. N=672.



A work environment that supported their gender identity or sexual orientation affected the mental health of the 2SLGBTQ+ workers who participated in the survey. Respondents who described their workplaces as supportive were more likely to have good overall mental health than those who described their workplaces as unsupportive.



CHAPTER 7

Unions and employers

While many survey respondents felt supported by their employers and unions, a high proportion of workers were not out at work (see Chapter 4). Other workers felt that they had no one to turn to if they faced discrimination and/or did not feel supported by their employer or union.

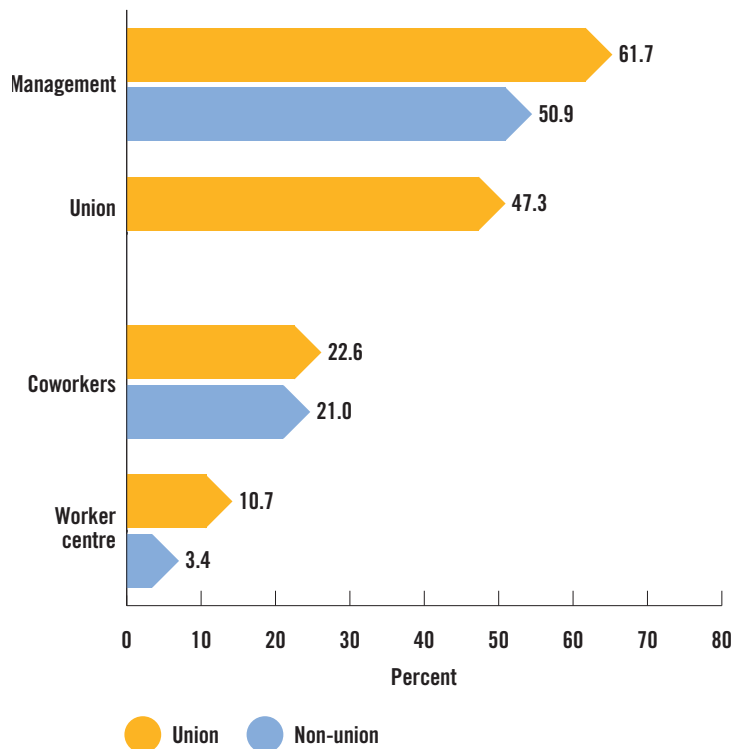
Unionized workers were overrepresented in the survey sample, with 38.7% being union members compared to 25.2% of Ontario’s workforce. Just over half of the unionized sample (55.0%) worked in the public sector. The mean age of union members in our sample was 35, slightly older than non-unionized workers whose mean age was 31. Racialized respondents were overrepresented in unions at 50.3%.

7.1 Where would you go for help with discrimination?

A significant number of respondents (20.6%) stated that they would not seek help from anyone other than coworkers if they faced discrimination at work. Workers were less likely to seek help if they were under the age of 35 (85.3%, $P=0.002$), and if they worked in jobs that were non-union (84.2%, $P=0.000$) and in the low wage service sector (35.9%, $P=0.004$).

Unionized workers were more comfortable seeking assistance in the case of discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation than non-union workers, but were more likely to turn to their employer than their union (Figure 7.1). This number was higher for public sector workers than for private sector workers (60.1% and 32.4% respectively, $P=0.000$). Only 3.4% of non-union workers would turn to a worker centre if they faced discrimination.

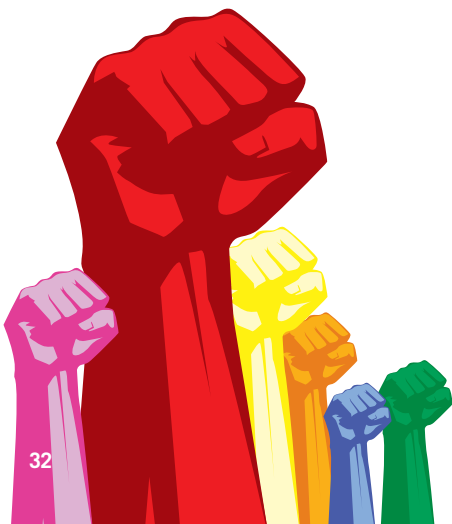
Figure 7.1: Percent of unionized and non-unionized respondents who would go to each of: coworkers, management, union, and worker centre for help if they faced discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Respondents could select multiple options. $N(\text{union})=243$, $N(\text{non-union})=385$. Pearson chi-square tests were conducted for ‘coworkers’ and ‘management’. Coworkers: $df=1$, $\chi^2=0.2233$, $P=0.637$. Management: $df=1$, $\chi^2=7.0486$, $P=0.008$.



Several interviewees described being reluctant to turn to their union in the interviews. When asked whether she would feel comfortable seeking help from her union, one interview participant said:

“I can’t say that it would be the first thing that would come to my mind as somewhere to go. It’s a bit of an elusive thing that exists that I know that I’m a part of that I don’t... that I’m not involved in.”

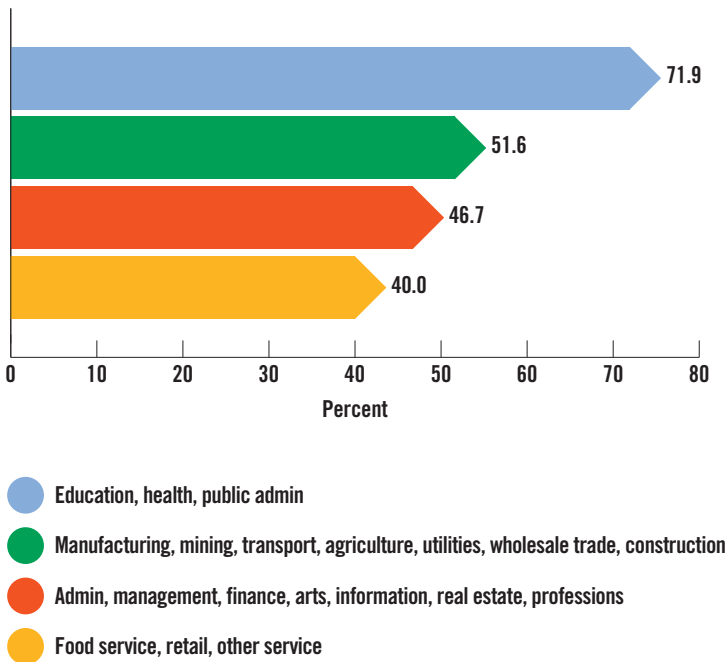
- W8 PANSEXUAL WOMAN



7.2 Union experiences

Over half of unionized 2SLGBTQ+ workers felt supported by their unions. When asked whether they feel that their union protects them from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, 89.6% of unionized respondents said either ‘yes’ (59.6%) or ‘somewhat’ (30.1%). Workers in education, health, and public administration were more likely to feel protected by their union (71.9%) whereas workers in low-waged services were the least likely to feel that their union protected them from discrimination (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: Percent of respondents who said that their union mostly or always protects them from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. N(manufacturing, mining, etc.)=31, N(admin, management, etc.)=45, N(education, health, etc.)=96, N(food service, retail, etc.)=20. Pearson chi-square test, df=3, $\chi^2=16.0246$, $P = 0.014$



Transgender and racialized respondents were less likely to feel that their union protects them from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, with 41.7% of racialized respondents ($P=0.000$) and 41.9% of transgender respondents ($P=0.025$) reporting ‘yes’ compared to 59.6% of the total sample.

Interviewees highlighted a variety of union actions that made them feel protected from discrimination. These included their union taking a strong stance on harassment and bargaining inclusive collective agreement language:

“Our union is very on top of, like, peer-on-peer harassment. Again, I wasn’t part of the union before so I was really really surprised coming into [work] and they come and check up on you every shift so they’ll ask you if anything is wrong and I’ve never had that before right?” - W5 GAY MAN

“The [union is] ... doing a phenomenal job. You know, it’s inclusive language and little box stuff, you know, spearheading, you know, let’s get some language in agreements for transitioning and all of that stuff.” - S24 LESBIAN WOMAN

More broadly, 66.5% of unionized workers felt that their union was either mostly or always committed to supporting 2SLGBTQ+ members. There were no significant differences between public and private sector workers.

In addition to protection from discrimination and harassment, 2SLGBTQ+ workers felt supported by union-led 2SLGBTQ+ specific education and training, and by committees and resources that brought 2SLGBTQ+ members together.

“Oh if you take advantage of it they offer a lot of, first of all, resources, so if you want to educate yourself on something to do with equity or being LGBTQ, they offer socials, they offer support groups, they offer provincially even more so, in Toronto there’s even more, there is specific LGBTQ committees that you can join. Like I think [my union] specifically is very helpful and supportive of the LGBTQ members in their unions.” - S11 GAY MAN

For one transgender woman, the union provided pamphlets and the support of staff representatives when she came out at work, although she wished she had been consulted in advance and been able to direct the process:

“I forget what the title was but [one was about] how to come out in the workplace as trans and one was how to be an ally to a trans person, specifically for transgender people, not for LGBTQ but specifically for trans which I found really interesting, like whoa ... I didn’t like the way they presented [my coming back to work after transitioning] ... [but] our union rep was pretty good, she just kind of followed my lead because I was very confident at the time ... They wanted to parade me around ... [but] I’m going to do it my way.” - W14 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

Many interviewees, however, felt disconnected from their unions. 35.8% of survey respondents had never contacted their union for any reason, and 58% had not attended a union meeting in the previous six months. 18 interviewees described feeling or being disconnected from their unions. Several reported being unaware of the supports their unions offered to 2SLGBTQ+ members:

INTERVIEWER: *“Do you know if either of the unions have any LGBTQ+ committees or supports?”*

“Nope. Not a clue. I haven’t even thought about it. I have no idea. Can’t say I have a reason to ask either. It’s like, whatever.” - W9 BISEXUAL WOMAN

Other interviewees reported a complete lack of support or even discrimination from their union. Experiences of discrimination were more likely to be the result of regressive attitudes from Local leadership as opposed to directives from national, district, or other levels:

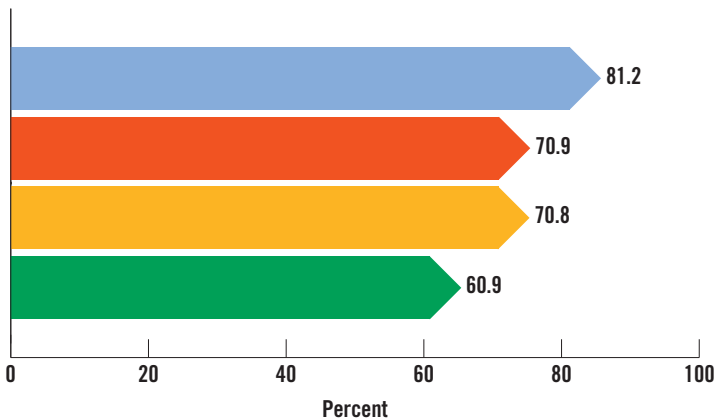
“I happen to know that both President and my union local leader are... I was thinking anti-trans but they’re definitely very conservative towards this kind of change.” - S1 TRANSGENDER WOMAN

Ultimately, interviewees wanted their unions to be more active in supporting 2SLGBTQ+ workers. Participants felt that educational initiatives, social events and committees to build community among 2SLGBTQ+ members, and symbolic efforts to demonstrate that the union is an ally to the 2SLGBTQ+ community would contribute to that goal.

7.3 Employer experiences

2SLGBTQ+ workers’ experiences of their employers were mixed. While 73.3% of survey respondents said that their employer supported people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, this varied by industry. Workers in blue-collar industries—such as manufacturing and mining—reported the lowest rates of support (60.9%, Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Percent of respondents who said their current workplace is either ‘somewhat supportive’ or ‘very supportive’ of people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, by industry. N(manufacturing, mining, etc.)=69, N(admin, management, etc.)=141, N(education, health, etc.)=234, N(food service, retail, etc.)=144. Pearson chi-square test, df=6, $\chi^2=14.1957$, $P = 0.028$



- Education, health, public admin
- Admin, management, finance, arts, information, real estate, professions
- Food service, retail, other service
- Manufacturing, mining, transport, agriculture, utilities, wholesale trade, construction

Employers supported 2SLGBTQ+ workers formally through policy or workplace changes and informally by demonstrating their understanding on a day-to-day basis. Concrete ways that employers supported 2SLGBTQ+ workers included enforcing anti-discrimination policies, holding diversity/awareness trainings and accommodating mental health and medical leaves. One interviewee said:

“The one good thing is I feel like management kind of has your back. Like right now I’m on a sick leave because, you know, I’ve been having a pretty rough mental illness period, and the staff was like really you know... great about me really saying ‘no you need help, you need to get better’.” - W4 NON-BINARY WORKER

Employers in retail and food service often supported 2SLGBTQ+ workers by intervening when customers or coworkers harassed them. One transgender man described how his boss supported him by ensuring that people used his correct pronouns:

“I feel like now ... my bosses are some of my biggest allies because if a new person comes into the store and they mess up my pronouns like everybody’s on them so everybody’s pretty protective of me at least.” - S13 TRANSGENDER MAN

Not all employers were supportive of 2SLGBTQ+ workers. Interview participants also shared experiences of discrimination and harassment from management (see Chapter 6). Some forms of discrimination by employers, however, were more subtle. Several interviewees, for example, described employers who would avoid making public statements supporting 2SLGBTQ+ people while saying that they would support individual workers:

“employers in general, they have to come out of the closet too, not as gay but they need to come out of the ‘I will support you’ closet. There’s too many employers that I know of ... that will not explicitly say that they’re accepting ... So I think employers need to come out and say that they’re accepting. No more of this ‘we’ll be accepting if you come out.’ That’s not acceptable.” - W1 LESBIAN WOMAN

In another example, a worker described how a manager asked him to hide his sexuality at work under the guise of support:

“My boss knew that I was gay ... But also at the same time, she would pull me aside and say things like, ‘well, I support you. I don’t know if other parents in the community would. You might want to keep it under wraps’.” - W18 GAY MAN

Overall, interview participants thought their employers could do more to support 2SLGBTQ+ employees. When asked what they would like to see, participants mentioned education and anti-oppression training, anti-discrimination and harassment policies, and publicly demonstrating that they support 2SLGBTQ+ people to signal the workplace is an inclusive space. As described by one worker:

“Silence is often taken as being against, so by not actually being verbally supportive of that is a missed opportunity.” - S1 TRANSGENDER WOMAN



AMBASSADOR
BRIDGE

Bridge to U.S.A in Windsor



LGBTQ2S+
Work & Inclusion

AMBASSADOR
BRIDGE

CHAPTER 8

Recommendations

The findings here capture the complex challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada working to maintain livelihoods in regions beyond major metropolitan areas such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. The stories told here are not anomalous. Rather, they represent a large subset of people in Canada as over one third of the country's urban population lives in small and mid-sized cities. They also reinforce recent research on the work experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians in general. Waite et al. (in press) describe the occupational profile of bisexual women, gay men and lesbians in Canada using data from the Canadian Community Health Survey. They find that LGB groups were under-represented in: Trades, transport, equipment operators, and related occupations (<5% of each group compared with 26.3% of heterosexual men and 19.5% of gay men); Natural resources, agriculture, and related occupations; occupations in manufacturing and utilities; Primary industries; Secondary industries (utilities, construction, manufacturing) and Wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing. Bisexual men and women were overrepresented in retail work compared to other categories, and all women and non-heterosexual men were overrepresented in education and health care compared with heterosexual men. The occupations of the people we interviewed reflected these overall patterns with a high percentage of participants working in the public sector or service sector (see Chapter 2). The findings of this report also support previous research on transgender workers in Ontario conducted by Trans PULSE, which found significant rates of employment discrimination against transgender workers (Bauer et al., 2011).

In cities such as Sudbury and Windsor, 2SLGBTQ+ people are frequently caught between “traditional” industrial workplaces that are secure but not always welcoming and more precarious service work that may seem more tolerant of diverse identities. This economic backdrop is further complicated by cross-cutting factors such as education, racism and racialization, Indigeneity and gender identity. Throughout the analyses of employment inequalities, workplace experiences, health and

wellbeing, and union participation, racialized and transgender workers consistently experience worse outcomes compared to their white and cisgender counterparts. Yet work environments in these cities are becoming more accepting and unions are in some ways on the leading edge of this change. Although the integration of 2SLGBTQ+ identities into workplace management structures is far from seamless, there are clear efforts being made to enfranchise workers with diverse sexual and gender identities.

The following is a preliminary list of further measures that government, unions, and community agencies, as well as individual workplaces, in Sudbury, Windsor, and Ontario more broadly could consider to further support the livelihoods of 2SLGBTQ+ workers:

8.1 Recommendations for employers

1. Employers must seek to actively educate their workers about sexual and especially gender diversity and the ways in which they interface with workplace practices and policies. Education could involve courses, seminars, guest speakers, retreats, or film viewings. As well, sexual and gender diversity content should be integrated into other relevant course topics, such as training for supervisors.
2. Using the findings from this research, employers should review their internal practices—including those for communicating with workers, receiving concerns and complaints, and setting norms for behaviour during all workplace activities—to remove barriers for 2SLGBTQ+ workers (and especially racialized, Indigenous, and transgender workers), provide overt support to them, and generally to make the workplace a healthy, non-discriminatory space.
3. Employers should encourage workers to report subtle and indirect homophobic, transphobic, racist and/ or anti-Indigenous discrimination, which comprise the bulk of discrimination experiences among 2SLGBTQ+ workers. Workers require assurance that doing so will not negatively affect their work security or evaluation, and that reported harassment must be investigated seriously, with the consent of the victim and support of union if one is present in the workplace.
4. Employers should consider implementing leave policies that allow 2SLGBTQ+ and other vulnerable workers to seek care for and recover from mental and physical health issues (e.g., chronic pain, anxiety, depression, substance use) associated with living and working in potentially transphobic, homophobic, racist and/or anti-Indigenous environments.





8.2 Recommendations for unions

1. Unions must similarly engage with members about the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada, including rights at work, and engage in member education and advocacy on sexual and gender diversity. This content should also be integrated into training for those in leadership roles, including health and safety representatives and shop stewards.
2. Appointing 2SLGBTQ+ members to act as liaisons who can address the concerns of fellow 2SLGBTQ+ members is important, but not necessarily sufficient.
3. Unions should ensure workplace representatives are trained to support members facing homophobic, transphobic, racist and/ or anti-Indigenous discrimination through a resolution process of their choosing, and bargain robust anti-harassment language in contracts.
4. Unions should review their internal practices—including those for engaging members, handling grievances, and setting norms for behaviour during all union activities—to remove barriers to participation for 2SLGBTQ+ members (and especially racialized, Indigenous, and transgender workers), provide overt support to them, and make the union a healthy, non-discriminatory space.

8.3 Recommendations for community organizations

1. Physicians and mental health professionals in Sudbury, Windsor, and other small- and mid-sized cities should pursue education about 2SLGBTQ+ issues and the ways in which sexual orientation and gender identity intersect with factors such as education, racism and racialization, and Indigeneity. They must reach out explicitly to 2SLGBTQ+ workers and provide assurance of non-discriminatory and supportive care. Similarly, counselors already supporting 2SLGBTQ+ communities should be apprised of the economic challenges likely to affect these populations. Physicians and mental health professionals should heed the advice and guidance of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities they serve.
2. 2SLGBTQ+ support agencies in Sudbury, Windsor, and other small and mid-sized Canadian cities should continue efforts to integrate transgender-identified, racialized and Indigenous individuals into both formal programming (e.g., hiring racialized counsellors, Indigenous counsellors and trans counsellors) and social and community events. Transgender, Indigenous, and racialized respondents in this study expressed experiencing more severe outcomes and events (e.g., violence at work, threats to safety, difficulty sustaining employment) and in smaller cities may rely on just one or two 2SLGBTQ+ agencies as safe havens or outlets.

8.4 Recommendations for everyone

1. Employers, unions, support agencies, and health-care providers should augment their understanding of the added negative impacts that result when racism and homophobia or transphobia intersect.

Literature cited

Chapter 1:

King, A. D. (2017). Memory, mobilization, and the social bases of intra-union division: Some lessons from the 2009-2010 USW local 6500 strike in Sudbury, Ontario. *E-Journal of International and Comparative Labour Studies*, 6(3).

Kinsman, G. (2017). A contribution to the history of the first Sudbury pride march in 1997. Radical Noise. Retrieved from: <http://radicalnoise.ca/2017/11/04/a-contribution-to-the-history-of-the-first-sudbury-pride-march-in-1997/> on May 8, 2020

Statistics Canada. (2017a). *Greater Sudbury, CDR [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).

Statistics Canada. (2017b). *Windsor [Census metropolitan area], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).

The City of Windsor, Diversity. (n.d.) Diversity. <https://www.citywindsor.ca/business/physician-recruitment/Live/Pages/Diversity.aspx> (accessed June 8, 2020)

Chapter 2:

Statistics Canada. 2017a. *Greater Sudbury, CDR [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).

Statistics Canada. 2017b. *Windsor [Census metropolitan area], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).

Statistics Canada. (2018). Table 14-10-0095-01 Labour force characteristics by census metropolitan area, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/1410009501-eng>

Chapter 4:

Statistics Canada. 2017a. *Greater Sudbury, CDR [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).

Statistics Canada. 2017b. *Windsor [Census metropolitan area], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).

Chapter 6:

Conron, K. J., Mimiaga, M. J., & Landers, S. J. (2010). A population-based study of sexual orientation identity and gender differences in adult health. *American journal of public health*, 100(10), 1953-1960.

Lewchuk, W., Lafleche, M., Procyk, S., Cook, C., Dyson, D., Goldring, L., ... & Viducis, P. (2015). The precarity penalty: Poverty and employment precarity in Southern Ontario.

Steele, L. S., Daley, A., Curling, D., Gibson, M. F., Green, D. C., Williams, C. C., & Ross, L. E. (2017). LGBT identity, untreated depression, and unmet need for mental health services by sexual minority women and trans-identified people. *Journal of Women's Health*, 26(2), 116-127.

Chapter 8:

Bauer, G., Nussbaum, N., Travers, R., Munro, L., Pyne, J., & Redman, N. (2011). We've got work to do: Workplace discrimination and employment challenges for trans people in Ontario. *Trans PULSE e-Bulletin*, 2(1), 1-3.

Waite, Sean, Pajovica, Vesna, Denier, Nicole In Press. Lesbian, gay and bisexual earnings in the Canadian labor market: New evidence from the Canadian Community Health Survey. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*. Available online 11 February 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2020.100484>



PRIDE

PRAIRIE RIVER

NIGHT CITY
ROLLER DERBY

#UnionPride



Funding was provided by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), grant # 890-2016-0073.