# Honouring Queer Newcomer Voices of Toronto: Building Capacity of Service Providers to Create a More Welcoming Scarborough

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Introd	uction
	action

- The TEQ LIP identified a trend; LGBTQIA+ newcomers from Scarborough access settlement, support and community services in downtown Toronto.
- LGBTQIA+ newcomers typically originate

	Results				
Fig 1:	Factors of comfort while using serv	vices for LGBTQIA r	newcomers in Scark	oorough <i>(%)</i>	
	Very Important So	mewhat important	Less important	Not at all important	
	Signage in multiple languages				
	Accessible physical space				

#### Results cont.

3 themes were highlighted across the responses for all three research tools:
1. Limited (access to) Safe and Comfortable Spaces (e.g. see figure 1).
2. Split Identity; meeting one need (at a

from countries where they face overt discrimination, violence and persecution because of sexual orientation and gender identity<sup>1</sup>.

- In Toronto they are at a high risk of mental health issues due to discrimination (hate crimes, violence, harassment) when accessing services (housing, employment, health)<sup>2</sup>.
- Canada is taking a proactive approach to welcoming LGBTQIA+ newcomers through its expanding refugee
   sponsorship program<sup>3</sup> and settlement funding<sup>4</sup>.
- The research set out to understand the effectiveness and accessibility of service provision through experiences of service



When reviewing space for comfort levels when accessing services (figure 1), Signage in Multiple Languages was indicated as both Not at all important and Very Important (38%). Inclusive language was cited as the most important need (58%), closely followed by LGBTQIA+ Affirming Signage and Sensitive Staff (50%).

Fig 2: Capacity of Service Providers to Serve LGBTQIA+ Newcomers in Scarborough (%)

oppression and anti-

discrimination policy?

time) (e.g. see figure 2).3. Myths & Lack of Awareness (see focus group quote).

### Discussion

- All three parts of the research demonstrate a range of experiences for both service user and service provider, and opportunities to build capacity in multiple areas, to address a list of needs based on priority.
- These opportunities can be divided into primary and secondary recommendations:
- Primary Targeted capacity building for service providers working to meet basic

users.

#### Methodology

- Exploratory research, predominantly qualitative design to gather stories and understand common experiences.
- Participatory community research approach. Tool design and execution completed in collaboration with TEQ LIP Health Action Group.
- Two surveys (33 service providers & 17 service users),
- Focus group (11 service users; length of stay in Canada 2 weeks – 3 years, av. 6 months).
- Open-ended questions to encourage

70 —	I Ye	s No Unsure Did Not Answer
60 —		
50		
40 —		
30 —		
20 —		
10 —		
0 —		
	Does your organization currently have an anti-	

of affirming/positive

LGBTQIA+ resources?

High numbers of service providers report (figure 2) being sure their organisation has an anti-oppression and anti-discrimination policy (72%). Approx. one third of organisations have undergone LGBTQIA+ specific training (30%), and display LGBTQIA+ affirming signage (36%).

"[They] referred to me as 'he' because of my paperwork." (translation)

needs i.e. housing, health and employment.

- Secondary Support for allies through existing networks and tools to maintain capacity building and development of understanding of the intersecting needs of this community.
- The research was specifically designed to collate experiences of an underserved community; it's important these voices are shared with intention and dignity.

## Acknowledgements

 Thank you to the many members of the TEQ LIP Physical Health and Emotional Wellbeing Action Group for

#### storytelling.

- Closed questions to support specific service delivery recommendations.
- Focus group established with existing LGBTQIA+ newcomer support group; trauma-informed and accessible.
- Phenomenology used to establish themes among responses.

~ Woman focus group attendee on misuse of pronouns.

All focus group respondents said their top priorities were housing, updating ID to represent their sex and/ or gender identity, and finding work, closely followed by finding "genuine help" and "going to school". disseminating the surveys among its networks of community members and service providers.

Particular thanks goes to the community members who participated in this research; for your openness to sharing your story.

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and Citizenship Canada et Citoyenneté Canada

#### References:

training?

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International. (2001). Crimes of hate, conspiracy of silence: Torture and ill-treatment based on sexual identity. (134). Oxford, U.K: Amnesty International Publications <sup>2</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer identified People and Mental Health. (unknown). Retrieved from <u>https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-queer-</u> <u>identified-people-and-mental-health/</u>

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Government's stance on support for LGBTQ2S+ refugees. (2019). Retrieved from <u>https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/canada-role/lgbtq2.html</u>

<sup>4</sup> Call for proposals 2019: Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs funding guidelines (2019). Retrieved from <u>https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-</u> citizenship/corporate/partners-service-providers/funding/call-for-proposals-2019-settlement-and-ressetlement-funding-guidelines.html