

Final Report & Recommendations

Public Engagement on LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion in Yukon Government Services

April 2019

Submitted to Government of Yukon Women's Directorate

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Preamble..... | Pg. 3 |
| Cultural Competency, Awareness & Education..... | Pgs. 3–9 |
| • <i>Education & Training</i> | <i>Pgs. 3–5</i> |
| • <i>Yukon Government Leadership</i> | <i>Pg. 6</i> |
| • <i>Accessing & Sourcing LGBTQ2S+ Resources & Services</i> | <i>Pgs. 6–7</i> |
| • <i>Washroom Facilities</i> | <i>Pg. 7</i> |
| • <i>Gendered Programming</i> | <i>Pgs. 8–10</i> |
| Health & Wellness..... | Pgs. 8–14 |
| • <i>Mental Health</i> | <i>Pgs. 8–10</i> |
| • <i>Systems Navigation & Trans Health</i> | <i>Pgs. 10–11</i> |
| • <i>Sexual Health</i> | <i>Pgs. 11–13</i> |
| • <i>Family Planning</i> | <i>Pgs. 13–14</i> |
| • <i>Older Adults & Seniors in Continuing Care</i> | <i>Pg. 15</i> |
| Youth Support in School & Education..... | Pgs. 15–16 |
| • <i>Rural Experiential Model</i> | <i>Pg. 16</i> |
| LGBTQ2S+ Employment..... | Pgs. 16–18 |
| • <i>YG as an Employer</i> | <i>Pgs. 17–18</i> |
| • <i>LGBTQ2S+ Tourism</i> | <i>Pg. 18</i> |
| Rural & Community Support..... | Pgs. 18–19 |
| LGBTQ2S+ Culture & Community Building..... | Pgs. 19–21 |
| • <i>LGBTQ2S+ Community & Resource Centre</i> | <i>Pgs. 20–21</i> |
| Justice & Legal..... | Pgs. 21–22 |
| • <i>Youth & Parental Consent</i> | <i>Pg. 21</i> |
| • <i>Family Law</i> | <i>Pg. 21</i> |
| • <i>Incarcerated Folk</i> | <i>Pgs. 21–22</i> |

Appendix I: Engagement Participant Demographic Information

Appendix II: What We Heard (March, 2019)

Appendix III: Terminology

Appendix IV: What We Heard (October, 2018)

Preamble

It has been QMUNITY's privilege and honour to work in collaboration with LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners across the territory, and their allies, loved ones and families. Engagement and dialogue is a powerful act of community mobilization, healing, and connection. From Whitehorse, north to Dawson City, east to Watson Lake; in community centres, health clinics, libraries and school classrooms; QMUNITY staff met compassionate, generous and powerful LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners and allies.

A shared sentiment for many of the individuals was that this work is important, necessary, and frankly, overdue. LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners are deserving of dignified, affirming and equitable treatment, protection, and services from government departments. Unfortunately, for many, this has not been the case. The following report is QMUNITY's attempt to capture the essence of *many* experiences and recommendations.

The LGBTQ2S+ community is neither monolithic nor static. While we can recognize the hard work of individuals we heard from, and amplify their voices through this report, we must also recognize whose voices we did not hear; whether they did not feel safe engaging, did not hear about it, or did not believe their voice would be heard. In particular, we did not hear directly from LGBTQ+ Newcomers, LGBTQ2S+ incarcerated folk, and LGBTQ2S+ seniors. In their absence, we have listened to allies and advocates, and provided recommendations based on best practices QMUNITY has been advocating for, for 40 years.

QMUNITY would like to take this time to remind the Yukon Government – firmly and with our full support – that the work is not over. In fact, the hardest part has just begun. Having had the opportunity to hear from LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners and work extensively with a queer, trans, and Two-Spirit resource centre, the Yukon Government has a bounty of opportunities before them: to fundamentally shift how programs, policies and services are planned, marketed and delivered; to build trust and new relationships with diverse communities; and truly begin to realize the potential and the power of diverse genders and sexualities that are celebrated and can in turn inform and enrich the work of the Yukon Government.

Inclusion is a constantly evolving and iterative principle. The work ahead should not have an end-date, but rather be cyclical. LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners are eager to see these recommendations be actualized. In particular, this work should be supported by local LGBTQ2S+ folk and organizations who are remunerated for their time, labour and contributions.

1. Cultural Competency, Awareness & Education

Virtually all individuals and organizations that participated in the engagement expressed a need for a culture shift in understanding, working alongside and including LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in government services and, beyond that, in the social and cultural fabric of the Yukon. While education and training is one highly-regarded and effective strategy to partially accomplish this, several other strategies and recommendations were identified and shared, and are expanded upon below.

1.1 Education & Training

“Training is key because you don't want one person who can do all of the work, you want everyone to be competent in LGBTQ2S+ issues, no matter if you are a family member or work at a post office.” – Focus group participant

“I think policy in the absence of organized education and internal dialogue could be quite problematic.” – Online submission from participant

Across all forms of engagement, education and training for professionals, youth and community members was articulated as high importance and high priority in creating a more affirming, safe and inclusive Yukon for LGBTQ2S+ folk. The quote above rings true that a top-down approach to policy change will fail to be enacted if staff, professionals, and community members at large are not also provided with the tools, resources and knowledge to understand how and why these shifts in policy are important, ask questions to better understand LGBTQ2S+ experiences, enact the changes in an affirming and safe manner, and address questions from the public.

Multiple participants drew parallels to government-mandated First Nations competency training as an effective model that could be replicated for LGBTQ2S+ inclusion training. While the Yukon Government may not be directly responsible for training associated with some professional bodies, participants wished for the government to use all levers at their disposal in order to influence, provide and prioritize LGBTQ2S+ training for professions outside of their direct scope (e.g. doctors, police, educators).

Broadly speaking, there are two categories of training:

(1) Cultural competency training provides basic and introductory information on how to treat LGBTQ2S+ people respectfully (language, pronouns, visibly inclusive environments, consideration/reflection of hiring practices or marketing strategies, case study scenarios, etc.)

Queer competency training is a large component of QMUNITY's educational services and programming with over 100 workshops delivered per year to health care professionals and service providers; there are also a number of individuals and organizations who are doing similar work in the Yukon including Chase Blodgett Consulting and the Northern Gender Alliance.

(2) Advanced and technical training on specific medical and/or surgical procedures specific to queer, trans, and Two-Spirit populations.

WPATH (World Professional Association of Transgender Health), CPATH (Canadian counterpart), and Prism Services (operating out of Vancouver Coastal Health) may be appropriate avenues to explore in order to access such specialized training.

For Health Care Professionals

Health care practitioners and administrative support staff should receive, at minimum, basic LGBTQ2S+ cultural competency training so as to ensure respectful language is being used, instances of discrimination are minimized and addressed internally and between colleagues, inappropriate or demeaning questions are not asked, and LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners can feel safer in disclosing their sexual or gender identity, if they so

choose. There were additional professions within health care that were deemed as high importance to receive advanced and technical training as it pertains to accessing a medical transition and/or supporting queer patients. This is expanded upon in **Section 2.0 – Health & Wellness**.

It is worth noting the breadth of professionals that may be implicated in such a recommendation. The list, generated from engagement participants, can include but is not limited to:

- Administrative staff
- Caregivers and support staff in nursing homes and seniors'-serving facilities
- First responders, including police, paramedics and firefighters
- Nurses and nurse practitioners, including those in remote communities*
- Doctors, including those working in hospitals and private clinics*
- Mental health counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists*
- Specialized health care professionals (e.g. RMTs, midwives)*

** Denotes that advanced and technical training would be of benefit within these particular professions.*

In Education

“Give teachers training about gender identity and ensure that they cannot discriminate against their students.” – Online submission from youth participant

In recent years, policies have been updated to be more supportive of LGBTQ2S+ children, youth and families. These include the sexual orientation and gender identity curriculum additions and The Safe and Caring Schools Policy Guide. Several educators and youth suggested that, while policies have shifted, educators have been left with very few resources to meaningfully and confidently enact inclusive policies and guidelines in their classrooms and hallways. In addition, educators who have accessed learning materials have had to put in extra work which went unpaid. Finally, many educators expressed frustration with ambivalent or, worse, hostile administrative leadership that would not endorse or support LGBTQ2S+ positive initiatives, often out of fear of parental concern and community backlash.

Training within educational settings can be provided for educators and other support staff (e.g. educational assistants); administrative leadership; school councils; Ministry staff and leadership; and in classrooms for youth (e.g. anti-bullying workshops that speak specifically to LGBTQ2S+ experiences of bullying). Additional recommendations for education and school support can be found in **Section 3.0 – Youth Support**.

Within Criminal Justice, Police & Victim Services

Several LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners shared that they do not feel safe calling the police or navigating the justice system in a time of need. This was articulated most frequently through online submissions. At times, the response can appear inadequate or unable to address the particular ways street harassment, intimate partner violence or assault might impact LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

Culturally and historically speaking, the relationship between policing and queer communities is one defined by strain, tension and mistrust. This may result in heightened distrust and caution in reaching out to police services in the Yukon, and would suggest that the justice system (including correctional facilities), police and victim services would benefit a great deal from LGBTQ2S+ cultural competency training.

1.2 Yukon Government Leadership

Given the far reach of the Yukon Government, as both an employer and service provider, YG is uniquely positioned to promote cultural shifts and raise awareness of LGBTQ2S+ equity in the lives of all Yukoners. Many public engagement participants wanted to compel the public service and elected leaders to be a strong voice, advocating for LGBTQ2S+ equity and inclusion in the Yukon. This includes elected officials and ministers taking public stands and making public statements in support of LGBTQ2S+ inclusion (including in support of this engagement) and voicing their commitments in ministerial pledges.

“Where is the courageous leadership? We need our leaders to not just accommodate LGBTQ2S+ folk, but actually value and celebrate their contributions to Yukon and its workforce.” – Focus group participant

Pronouns in E-mails & Business Cards

Recently, many businesses and service providers are including an individual's pronouns in their e-mail signatures and/or business cards. Including it in e-mail signatures and/or business cards creates opportunities for questions and dialogue for those who may not be aware of the importance of pronoun use for the trans and gender-diverse community, while also normalizing that trans and gender diverse folk are a part of the workforce and greater society. It also serves to remove assumptions for staff and colleagues, while talking about or forwarding on emails and other communications.

Recommendation: Institute YG-wide practice to add pronouns to e-mail signatures and possibly business cards.

LGBTQ2S+ Equity Questions in Funding

The Yukon Government provides funding for many agencies, not for profits, and service providers across the Territory. LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners would like to see LGBTQ2S+ inclusion and equity based questions as part of grant funding documents and processes. Many grant funding applications and contracts ask how projects support reconciliation or gender equity.

Recommendation: Similar questions about LGBTQ2S+ inclusion could be added to relevant YG grant funding applications. In instances where service providers may be unable to demonstrate LGBTQ2S+ inclusion, there exists another learning moment and space for dialogue and awareness raising from within YG.

1.3 Accessing & Sourcing LGBTQ2S+ Resources & Services

“[We] can rely on our friends for support, but what if you don't have that? Folks don't know where to go for community, questions or help, or who to contact.” – Focus group participant

Finding queer-competent resources and referrals and queer community-based events is difficult for many Yukoners, most especially those who are new to the Yukon. Many LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners and allies articulated a desire to have an easier time finding resources and referrals for LGBTQ2S+-competent service providers. If or when health or social service needs may already be complex, unique or compounding, the energy and labour required to find a friendly and affirming medical or social service can seem insurmountable.

Recommendations:

- *Maintain an online directory and provide clearer LGBTQ2S+ information on websites;*
- *Support the establishment of a staffed LGBTQ2S+ resource centre, which may provide referrals; and*
- *Support staffing in community-based agencies with similar equity-based mandates (e.g. designated, trained and advertised point of contact at a youth or health centre).*

1.4 Washroom Facilities

“Gender specific washrooms are a barrier [when accessing public buildings]. All public buildings should have gender neutral washrooms. This should be the norm.” – Online submission from participant

Recognizing that many washrooms have been restructured, redesigned or differently labelled to provide inclusive spaces for gender non-conforming folk, LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners also shared that there is still a lot of work to be done, most especially in public and government buildings. By prioritizing gender-inclusive, gender-neutral and/or all-genders washrooms, there exists another opportunity to continue shifting the cultural and day-to-day conversations of LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in the Yukon.

Campaigns and signage in the recent past have done an effective job of creating more affirming restroom space, while also serving to inform and educate the public. Recent examples include:

- [National LBGTQ Task Force \(US-based\)](#)
- [Rainbow Health Ontario](#)
- [Creating Authentic Spaces – The 519](#) (Toronto’s queer resource centre)

Recommendation: Renovate, reconfigure and/or post new signage to indicate all-genders washrooms; prioritize gender-neutral washrooms for all new builds, including schools, clinics, hospitals and other government buildings.

1.5 Gendered Programming

“For me, participating in swimming and dance lessons can be a barrier, because of fear of what people think about me if they realize I am transgender, and I fear being laughed at or ridiculed.” – Online submission from participant

“Zero opportunities for sports [in schools], I’m unable to choose boys’ or girls’ teams. There’s also massive discomfort surrounding change rooms, and I’m not allowed to opt out of sports in classes.” – Focus group participant

Recreational and sporting opportunities serve to mobilize and strengthen connections within communities and schools. They can bring people together, unify communities and neighbourhoods and result in a livelier, more connected, happier and resilient citizenry. However, the gender binary is deeply embedded in sports and recreational foundations, and the Yukon Government must consider the ways in which they support, endorse or are complicit in opportunities and programming that may exclude LGBTQ2S+ folk on the basis of gender, gender identity or sexuality.

Recommendation: Create and support recreational and sporting opportunities that invite all genders to participate in school, community and extracurricular programming.

2. Health & Wellness

The health system is large, complex and at times difficult to navigate. Add on to that the layers and complexity of being LGBTQ2S+, and other intersecting identities and factors, and the labour and time required to be a self-advocate, educator to health care professionals, and find time to make multiple appointments can become simply too much.

It is necessary to highlight that all LGBTQ2S+ folk access medical and health services for the same reasons as any other Yukoner might access health care – a broken bone, fever and illness, or to access mental health counselling. A common response among health care professionals is to try to respond and provide services on the basis of being LGBTQ2S+, even when it is irrelevant to the condition or issue being presented.

Recommendation: Provide LGBTQ2S+ cultural competency training for frontline health care practitioners so that they are better-equipped to respond to and meet the health needs of LGBTQ2S+

2.1 Mental Health

Mental health resources are viewed as inadequate and unable to respond to the needs of all Yukoners, let alone specifically LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. While the scope of this public engagement was on LGBTQ2S+ experiences, it is worth noting that the state of mental health services in the Yukon were repeatedly criticized as wholly inadequate, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Several participants wished to compel the government to seriously pursue a suicide prevention strategy, as the Yukon is one of the last jurisdictions to not have one in place.

One focus group had multiple participants share that they might exaggerate their acute needs for mental health intervention, even going so far as to embellish a crisis in order to receive adequate services and be plugged in to the system for more sustainable support. Alternatively, some individuals knew they had to exaggerate in order to get the services they needed, but feared the stigma that would come with this kind

of documentation in their health records. As a result, they stayed silent until appropriate treatment was no longer proactive, but actually reactive to somebody experiencing a severe mental health crisis.

Ultimately, this demonstrates a system that is underprepared and under-resourced to respond appropriately to the needs of communities, and a lack of commitment to patient-centred approaches to addressing mental health needs. This was especially articulated in communities outside of Whitehorse, where access to competent counselling and therapy is extremely limited, and requires massive interruptions to one's life in order to access (time off work, travel to Whitehorse, etc.).

Recommendations:

- *Create a staffed LGBTQ2S+ crisis line*
- *Enhance mental health crisis care in hospitals and emergency rooms*
- *Decrease wait times to access mental health professionals, most especially counsellors and psychologists*
- *Consistently schedule outreach to communities by mental health counsellors*
- *Establish partnerships to implement counselling in sites already accessed by community members (e.g. at a drop-in centre, in schools and other youth space)*
- *Mental health first aid training for service providers, including educators*

Conversion Therapy

“I don’t think people know [that] it’s not illegal. Most people assume it is, because it’s such a no-brainer that it should be illegal.” – Interview participant

“It might not be happening now, but we want to make sure it won’t happen again [in the future].” – Interview participant

Recently, students at two Yukon high schools have started [a petition to ban conversion therapy in the Yukon](#). The petition has garnered support from elected officials and positive media coverage, including two features through CBC and Yukon newspapers. As of April 3rd, the petition had collected 129 signatures and was tabled for discussion in the Yukon Legislature for April 9th, 2019.

Conversion therapy is a dangerous and oppressive pseudoscientific practice of trying to change an individual’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity using psychological or spiritual interventions.

[The Canadian Psychological Association’s official statement on conversion therapy is complete opposition.](#)

Scientific research does not support the efficacy of the therapy, and negative and dangerous outcomes often result including: distress, anxiety, depression, negative self-image, a feeling of personal failure, difficulty sustaining relationships and sexual dysfunction.

In March 2019, [the Federal Government rejected a petition for a nationwide ban on conversion therapy](#), explaining that governance and regulation of conversion therapy is a provincial and territorial issue. To date, only Ontario has initiated an outright ban, while Manitoba and Nova Scotia have regulations on who can provide the therapy, and who can access it. Vancouver, at a municipal level, has banned businesses from offering it.

Recommendation: The Yukon Government can demonstrate exemplary leadership and support of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners by acting as a national leader on banning conversion therapy practices in the Yukon, including transporting a minor outside of the territory in order enrol or access conversion therapy.

2.2 Systems Navigation & Trans Health

“There is no one to walk through or navigate parents of trans kids in transition. You get bounced around in departments but never get the help you need.” – Focus group participant

“Get rid of the extra hoops that a trans person needs to go through to access their unique needs for health care, so they can have some confidence that they will receive what they need in a timely manner – it is a process, but it doesn’t have to be dragged out.” – Online submission from participant

Navigating the health care system can be complex, unclear, and a huge investment of time and energy. For trans folk (and their families), pursuing medical and surgical transitions may require additional support and considerations. One individual compared the process to a game of *Snakes and Ladders* – depending on whose door you knock on, and resources at your disposal, you might get the support you need immediately and clear some bureaucratic hurdles (a ladder); if you knock on the wrong door, you might be met with inadequate support and have to take a few steps backwards (a snake). A standard of care, understood across all units within Health & Social Services in particular, would be just, fair and equitable.

Recommendations:

- *Funded position of a health navigator, to assist trans folk and their families to navigate the health care system, including guidance for any steps required to be plugged into Trans Care BC*
- *Access to a telehealth services platform to video conference with specialists outside of the Yukon*
- *Annual allowance to access gender-affirming services not readily available in the Yukon (e.g. electrolysis, voice therapy)*
- *Publically-funded coverage for hormonal therapy, without age restrictions*
- *Publically-funded coverage for top surgeries (e.g. masculinization of the chest or breast augmentation)*
- *Publically-funded coverage for psychologists to assess gender dysphoria. Note – in order to get referred into Trans Care BC, individuals require a psychologists' assessment, which is not currently covered/provided within the Yukon*
- *Take advantage of opportunities for duplicated efforts; the endocrinologist that visits for diabetes-related treatments could also provide hormonal therapy for trans folk*
- *Easier referral system into Trans Care BC, or other provincial partners, for individuals seeking advanced care not readily available in the Yukon*
- *Additional information and resources provided to parents, families and caregivers of trans youth*
- *Up-to-date and accurate medical advice on matters of fertility and sexual health for trans folk*
- *Grand-parent policy for any newly introduced policies and processes, to ensure that LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners who already have a trusted health care practitioner do not need to start a new relationship with a different health care professional*

2.3 Sexual Health

“I have challenges accessing [sexual] health care because everyone knows everyone; I’ve no desire to go see a doctor about sexual health needs, when I see that same doctor every day out and about.” – Focus group participant

“The YCDC [Yukon Communicable Disease Control] webpage for STI screening is very limited: no mention of inclusivity or safe spaces. That information needs updating.” – Focus group participant

Representation and information reflecting LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners is necessary in sexual health settings. [CATIE is a Canada-wide printing warehouse and resource agency](#) that provides hundreds of free print materials and booklets, most all of which consider the representation and consideration of an LGBTQ2S+ population.

Recommendation: Clinic waiting rooms, health centres, hospitals and associated websites should have pamphlets, brochures, resource guides, images and other literature that speaks to concerns and needs of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

“Queer women get left out because the focus is on “don’t get pregnant.” Queer women have other issues to be concerned about.” – Focus group participant

The invisibility factor – not seeing yourself or your social identities represented in literature, promotion and outreach – was especially articulated amongst queer and lesbian women. Historically, across Canada, public education on sexual health for women has centred around reproductive rights and options. Some individuals expressed a desire for public education and awareness raising for young folk and queer women in order to better understand sexual health needs and considerations. This may include risks and prevention strategies for STIs (including HPV) and safer sex practices. CATIE, as cited above, has several resources available that speak to healthier and safer sex for women who have sex with women (WSW).

Recommendation: Public education and awareness campaign for young folk and queer women specifically, in order to better understand sexual health needs and considerations.

Online STI Testing

Online STI testing is a newly-available option for STI testing in Canada, [including the BC Centre for Disease Control](#). Individuals may be asked to visit a website and provide basic screening information and order an at-home self-collection kit; once received, individuals provide a sample and drop off at a participating testing facility, without need for formal check-in and/or face-to-face contact with health care professionals. Individuals are notified via email when results are in. In the case of a positive test result, healthcare professionals are typically available to talk about next steps and treatment. Online testing and sample collection can cost upwards of \$80/test, and would help protect the anonymity and confidentiality of Yukoners wishing to access sexual health services. In remote communities, this may also increase access and frequency of sexual health testing.

Recommendation: The Yukon Government can utilize online testing in order to address some of the sexual health needs and barriers of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners, most especially those living in communities outside of Whitehorse. Online testing should be publicly funded.

Rapid HIV Testing

“Rapid HIV testing is not available anywhere in the territory, [current testing] takes two weeks to be sent to [British Columbia]. This is exacerbated in the communities where there is so much room for error like a wrongly-coloured tube cap or forms that are filled out incorrectly.” – Focus group participant

Rapid HIV testing kits are used to screen for HIV antibodies. The test uses a few drops of blood, which are taken from a finger poke. People who test negative will know their result within a few minutes; if the test is positive, it is not a final result and blood is taken from the arm and sent to a lab for a full test. If the test is negative, it is considered very accurate.

Recommendation: Adapt and implement publicly funded rapid HIV testing at all centres/clinics in the Yukon that offer sexual health and HIV testing.

HIV-Specific Preventative Medications

[PEP \(Post-Exposure Prophylaxis\)](#) and [PrEP \(Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis\)](#) are two separate, prescribed combinations of daily medications that can either drastically reduce the likelihood of transmission of HIV (PrEP), or effectively stop the potential transmission of HIV after 'risky exposure' (PEP). Out of pocket, these medications can cost several hundred dollars per month. It is believed that the population in Yukon that would access these medications is a relatively small minority. The benefit and impact is consistent with other sexual health best practices, specifically investing in tools to enhance education and awareness-raising and preventative strategies. In essence, the Yukon government can invest some money upfront, in order to reduce costs to the health care system in the future.

Recommendation: Implement and provide publicly-funded PEP and PrEP for populations deemed at-risk. British Columbia recently adopted legislation, funding and guiding best practices to offer this across British Columbia.

2.4 Family Planning

In two focus groups specifically, and one larger dialogue, questions around family planning were posed in hopes of eliciting responses. Across all demographics and forums in which the questions were posed, responses were quite simple: *I have no idea where to begin, and I haven't thought much about it.*

While the representative sample that we engaged with demonstrated a complete lack of knowledge, this may exemplify a larger trend within the Yukon: if you are LGBTQ2S+, and looking for information on reproductive rights and family planning, there is limited information available, and many individuals and families would not even know where to begin to look, ask questions and access more information.

With a recent public engagement and new regulations in place for midwifery in the Yukon, it will be another important sector of the Health & Social Services department to ensure [midwifery services are trans-affirming and queer competent](#). YG can support this recommendation by providing resources, including financial support to access training and updated literature, to support midwives operating throughout the Yukon.

Fertility Planning for Trans Folk

One area of family planning that did get specific feedback is fertility planning, options and health for trans folk, specifically those accessing medical and/or surgical transitions. Hormonal therapy may have unintended consequences to one's future fertility health, including becoming entirely infertile. There are, however, medical options available for trans folk who may wish to have biological children in the future, including freezing sperm or eggs.

Individuals expressed frustration with the Yukon health system, in which some professionals were ready to administer hormonal therapy and/or support in accessing surgeries, but failed to provide full disclosure on the impacts these procedures may have on one's fertility. Often, this failure was not a result of negligence, but of ignorance.

Recommendation: Additional, technical training should be made available for health professionals, so that in the future health care practitioners can appropriately counsel their patients to the full extent, as it pertains to fertility health and accessing medical/surgical transitions.

2.5 Older Adults & Seniors in Continuing Care

“At present, the experience[s] of LGBTQ+ elders/seniors remain virtually invisible within the long term care setting. I have personally worked with at least one resident (that I am aware of) who chose not to disclose their sexual identity after moving into care due to fear of discrimination.” – Online submission from participant

Generally speaking, we heard that many staff in senior care facilities understand and respect the dignity and individuality of residents; it is not their job to make judgments on their values, but rather create a safe environment in which seniors and older adults can live with dignity and a degree of independence that is appropriate to their health needs.

Many staff, however, may typically assume residents are cisgender and/or straight, and may not be aware of language or actions they take that serve to marginalize LGBTQ2S+ residents.

One focus group participant shared that a policy was under development several years ago regarding intimacy in seniors' care. While the policy seemed to have lost momentum, it was suggested this policy should be revisited, revised to include LGBTQ2S+ friendly language, and then formally adopted and implemented.

Recommendations:

- *Provide training for staff working within care facilities on LGBTQ2S+ cultural competency.*
- *Support the development or implementation of awareness-raising campaigns to address the invisibility of LGBTQ2S+ seniors. Egale Canada and The 519 are two Canadian LGBTQ2S+ resource agencies that have recently launched such campaigns, in addition to [QMUNITY's Aging Out report](#).*
- *Revitalize efforts to complete a policy on intimacy in seniors' care facilities, with updates to include LGBTQ2S+ affirming language, and implement in seniors' care facilities.*

3. Youth Support in School & Education

“Zero anonymity. My request for a name not to be used was disregarded.” – Focus group participant

“Some teachers refuse to acknowledge my pronouns.” – Focus group participant

“[YG needs to] hold schools and the Department of Education accountable in teaching the curriculum... I have watched young people grow up who are non-binary in this community be super lost and unsupported. The resources are not there, there are not clearly identified safe spaces where if they go they will be supported. In school, kids find themselves faster than you can imagine. Kids find each other and support each other, gay kids find gay kids, lesbians find lesbians, non-binary find non-binary. Even if they aren’t talking about it with each other. If you watch for it, you’ll see it, but it’s easily hiding... They are lost and trying to find their group, but they are being picked on and forced to conform to belong. [Teachers don’t intervene because] they don’t want to see it, or they don’t know how to address it. It takes skills that we did not get trained in at school.” – Interview participant

“The biggest barrier to providing education around sex and gender based identity is the school curriculum and community approaches to talking about LGBTQ2S+. If the education system doesn’t allow for kids and youth to learn about difference and what heteronormativity is and how to combat it to provide an inclusive environment in school, then where will the children learn this?” – Online submission from participant

In multiple engagements and from youth, parents and educators alike, we heard that schools are not a safe place to be an LGBTQ2S+ youth. While policy and curriculum have undergone changes and revisions in recent years, most folks shared that schools, school leadership, and communities have been unwilling or unable to follow through. Enacting these changes requires brave and courageous leadership in order to have difficult conversations with community members, teachers and other youth who may not otherwise be supportive or see the value in this work. It was speculated that this inadequate response may be out of fear of community/parent backlash, and a lack of training to provide educators and administrative leadership with the tools and language to feel more confident.

While some youth expressed that there are some adults who are supportive and helpful, this is not the typical experience and is most certainly not guaranteed at an institutional or systemic level. Some of the recommendations coming out of the engagement make reference to policies, programs or processes that are already in place, however they are weakly enacted without any check on accountability or opportunities for reflection, feedback and growth in implementation.

Recommendations:

- Information and education nights for parents, caregivers and community members
- Clear information on SOGI policies outlined on Ministry of Education website
- Point of contact within Ministry of Education to address and comment on feedback from parents, educators and youth expressing concerns/confusion on SOGI policy
- LGBTQ2S+ inclusion mandated at school board and leadership level, including extended training opportunities to provide tools to implement and support inclusion efforts, and a tracking, monitoring and performance review system for implementation
- All-genders washroom with low-barrier access (i.e. not having to ask for a key) at all schools
- Staff-supported gay-straight alliances, including dedicated space
- Enhanced representation in curriculum (e.g. queer families discussed in family planning course)
- Increase referrals for queer and trans-competent mental health counsellors
- Policy and training to protect confidentiality and discretion of LGBTQ2S+ youth accessing GSA spaces

3.1 Rural Experiential Model

Recognizing that youth in communities outside of Whitehorse are typically less-resourced than youth in Whitehorse, the REM was presented as a unique opportunity to expand and promote LGBTQ2S+ inclusion and equity in schools across the Yukon.

Recommendation: The Rural Experiential Model is an opportunity to provide workshops on LGBTQ2S+ anti-bullying, Gay-Straight Alliance Action Planning, and other workshops related to LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in schools.

4. LGBTQ2S+ Employment

Several individuals who participated in the engagement shared that they would not always be comfortable being out at their job, for fear of discrimination or harassment. This is often articulated as a common concern for many LGBTQ2S+ people. The burden of proof is quite substantial in order to demonstrate lack of promotions or disciplinary recourse is a result of one's gender and/or sexuality. Several other participants expressed the tendency that, once out at their job, they are tapped on the shoulder as the 'queer expert.' Efforts of inclusion, equity and justice are central to every person's job, and not simply one person's job.

Recommendations:

- *In cases of workplace discrimination, the Yukon Government needs to provide a mechanism to support employers to pursue restorative employment practices (e.g. remediation, training) and/or other disciplinary recourse to address discriminatory acts, and those who perpetuate them*
- *Provide resources and support to promote LGBTQ2S+ competency training in the private-sector, including in energy and natural resources and hospitality and tourism*

4.1 YG as an Employer

“We need to move beyond accommodating LGBTQ2S+ folk, and actually valuing queer, trans and Two-Spirit perspectives.” – Focus group participant

“Where is the courageous leadership?” – Focus group participant

Substantial feedback generated from participants suggest that the Yukon Government, as an employer specifically, has been harmful to LGBTQ2S+ folk employed within. YG has often created barriers to successful LGBTQ2S+ inclusion and necessary revisions to policies and procedures.

For many individuals involved in the engagement, it is important for them to hear from YG leadership that this engagement, the work coming out of it, and the impact it could have on LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners is important, necessary, and overdue. Trust has been eroded between YG and the LGBTQ2S+ community, and in order to begin to repair that relationship, many LGBTQ2S+ public servants want to see more out of elected officials and senior leadership.

Several YG staff articulated that they feared retribution if they spoke up and out about changes in policy or processes to better support LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. More recently, it was indicated there has been a shift in tone and acceptance. However, working to improve diversity, equity and inclusion takes time, substantial trust-building, and nurturing positive and mutually beneficial relationships. This work would be made much easier if we could make changes in one week, but these efforts require time, and the desired results or outcomes may not be apparent for months, or even years, later. The work is still important and necessary, even if results are not seen for some time. YG as an employer must put more trust in the process of relationship building, most especially with communities historically under-served or discriminated against by government services, policies and staff.

Recommendations:

- Ministerial pledges, press releases and interviews from senior leadership and elected officials to promote equity and inclusion among LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners;
- Ownership of and accountability for past wrongs, including public handlings of particular cases in which the government response was perceived to be slow or inadequate (e.g. Catholic school's lack of support for trans youth; discrimination and harassment complaints formally filed against YG, etc.);
- More generous approval of overtime hours for staff in order to access additional training and/or implement more inclusive outreach efforts (e.g. community visits);
- Support an employee resource group, or something of similar-nature, for YG and public sector staff identifying as LGBTQ2S+ ([visit here for reference and guidelines](#))

4.2 LGBTQ2S+ Tourism

Tourism is a high-profile sector in the Yukon, attracting thousands of visitors annually and especially in the summer. Tourism boosts local economies and provides employment to hundreds of Yukoners. LGBTQ2S+ Tourism, in particular, is a growing niche market [supported more broadly by the federal government, and other regional tourism agencies](#). LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners expressed a desire to see the territory expand and enhance their highly-regarded tourism profile, to include LGBTQ2S+ tourists and supporting LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners working within the industry.

Recommendations:

- Feature LGBTQ2S+ related events and festivals in tourist promotions
- Support businesses in hospitality and tourism to provide staff with LGBTQ2S+ competency training ([see: federal funding options](#))
- Encourage businesses in hospitality and tourism to articulate support for LGBTQ2S+ communities (e.g. rainbow stickers on doors)
- Promote rainbow crosswalks in communities across the Yukon.

5. Rural & Community Support

“A lot of people can’t get to Whitehorse, especially in the winter. There’s no bus service, plane service is shut down right now, and there are dangers around hitchhiking.” – Focus group participant

“When there’s a crisis in the community, everyone comes immediately after, there’s lots of resources right after. But then they all leave.” – Focus group participant

“Funding and outreach cannot be based on some 6-month trial. People in this community are used to people showing up and then leaving, severing connections.

We need a 3 to 5-year trial period [for any new initiatives].” – Focus group participant

The quotes above demonstrate typical and shared experiences of folks living in communities outside of Whitehorse, and the unique challenges individuals, families and communities face as a result. After hosting focus groups in Dawson City and Watson Lake, and participating in several one-on-one interviews, several recommendations to better support LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners living in communities surfaced to the top. These recommendations can and should be implemented concurrently with recommendations in other topics, themes and sectors.

Recommendations:

- *Consistently scheduled and rotating outreach to communities across Yukon to deliver queer-competent services (e.g. outreach van to visit communities to provide STI testing; social programming; and/or counselling over a multi-day period);*
- *Support enhanced connectivity between LGBTQ2S+ youth in different communities (e.g. pen pal programs for LGBTQ2S+ youth, sponsor bus trips to attend Pride events in Dawson City or Whitehorse);*
- *Support programming and staffing in community-based agencies with similar equity-seeking mandates (e.g. financial support for LGBTQ2S+ social programming at a youth centre).*

6. LGBTQ2S+ Culture & Community Building

LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners contribute to a rich and diverse Yukon; community contributions to arts and culture can be celebrated and supported more frequently. We also heard that for some LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners, most especially youth and those living in communities, their connection to a larger LGBTQ2S+ community is limited.

A sense of belonging is a significant factor in the livelihood and health of many LGBTQ2S+ folk. Even with a supportive family, many LGBTQ2S+ folk may experience a sense of isolation and loneliness, born out of the socially reinforced idea that, at best, LGBTQ2S+ folk are different and, at worst, are inferior, immoral and invalid. While LGBTQ2S+ events and programming happen from time to time, the initiatives are often volunteer-led by folks who may experience burnout after doing this labour for months, years or decades on end.

Recommendations:

- *Support already-established organizations with like-mandates to expand their services (e.g. All Genders Yukon, Northern Genders Alliance, Queer Yukon, Yukon Human Rights Commission)*
- *Sponsor LGBTQ2S+ related festivals, arts events, etc.*
- *Directly support youth connectivity, for example sponsoring attendance at Pride events and summer camps for LGBTQ2S+ and allied youth*
- *Sponsor connections among and between LGBTQ2S+ communities across the Yukon, and outside of the Yukon*

6.1 LGBTQ2S+ Community & Resource Centre

“Knowing you have permanent, secure funding to have a permanent space is a big deal... Once other organizations have settled into their space, all their stuff gets bigger and better because of that.” – Community dialogue participant

“This is a great opportunity to share with YG policy makers and our elected officials that, as far as I can see, the needs and priorities of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners are currently *only* being addressed by a small handful of volunteers working as not-for-profit societies... LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners need a group with sufficient and stable funding to implement the final recommendations of the consultation process, support the needs of the community, and represent the community at local, territorial and national levels.” – Online submission from participant

There was almost universal support for a queer community and resource centre to be established in Whitehorse, to serve the interests of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. Most every person involved in the engagements in which this was discussed articulated a desire for this agency to be independent of YG, but that the privilege and benefit of having secured funding to support staffing, programs and other resource development was of high value and high interest. While the agency could pursue grants and funding from private foundations, national and municipal governments, there is also an opportunity for YG to demonstrate exemplary leadership and provide funding to launch the agency and support its operations year to year.

Virtually every major city across Canada has an LGBTQ2S+ community or resource centre. While some may serve only a very small region or city, others, including QMUNITY, have provincial mandates. The scope of services, programs and resources available within any LGBTQ2S+ resource centre varies based on local needs and funding opportunities.

For LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in particular, many envisioned this centre to have programming that includes:

- Paid staff, with lived experiences;
- Peer-led support and social groups;
- Education and training services;
- Youth space and youth programming;
- Advocacy, representation and committee-based work at all levels of government, playfully dubbed an *Ombudsqueer*;
- Print materials, resources, pamphlets and information for LGBTQ2S+ folk, including health-related materials.

There was no consensus as to whether or not the centre should be a space in which health care services are *delivered*, but some LGBTQ2S+ centres across Canada have coupled their services with testing clinics with success. In a smaller community like Yukon, several folks expressed concerns around anonymity, confidentiality, and discretion while accessing health services in a community centre.

Recommendations:

- *Support the creation of a staffed LGBTQ2S+ community/resource centre, including access to stable and predictable funding year over year and suitable, appropriate and permanent space.*
- *Work closely with pre-existing LGBTQ2S+ not-for-profit societies and organizations that have been doing extensive work in the Yukon on a volunteer basis. This includes Queer Yukon, All Genders Yukon, Northern Genders Alliance and Dawson City Pride. Prioritize remuneration for associated work these organizations do to the benefit of YG and LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.*

7. Justice & Legal

Despite best efforts, targeted outreach, specific and deliberate questions and invitations for additional feedback, public engagement on matters of justice and legal systems proved to be difficult and limited.

Several participants shared that they did not feel safe being LGBTQ2S+ and in public, most especially at night or in certain social settings. This includes in bars and other establishments that serve alcohol, and was especially pronounced in communities where energy and mining sector tradespeople may come into communities for a short time and make a large impact on the sense of safety. This is in line with recent research that [suggests work camps in remote communities may contribute to increased reports of violence against women and other gender-based violence](#). While contemporary research specifically reports on violence against women, the LGBTQ2S+ community is impacted in similar ways by misogyny, toxic masculinity and strictly enforced gender and sexuality expectations.

7.1 Youth & Parental Consent

While not discussed within the public engagements, YG may want to consider the implications of a recent [BC Supreme Court ruling](#) that misgendering kids and preventing transition can constitute child abuse.

7.2 Family Law

Many LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners demonstrated an inability to answer questions around their options for family planning and associated family law. The most common response to questions about family planning and implications for family status, parental support, and so on was along the lines of 'I wouldn't even know where to begin.'

Recommendation: Invest in an awareness-raising campaign and/or resources to support information collection and knowledge gathering for LGBTQ2S+ parents considering their family planning options.

7.3 Incarcerated Folk

No one who participated in the engagement disclosed that they were once incarcerated. Engagement that did occur was primarily from individuals who speculated on conditions and experiences. The following details highlight some of these reflections, while building off of QMUNITY's previous work experience supporting LGBTQ2S+ incarcerated folk.

LGBTQ2S+ incarcerated folk, who are most often assigned living quarters based on a gender binary, may experience threats to their safety and physical well-being, on the basis of their gender identity and/or sexuality. Accessing gender-affirming garments, like bras and breast forms or binders, is extremely limited and dangerous as it may 'out' someone in the prison system.

Recommendation: Provide LGBTQ2S+ competency training for those working in correctional facilities, including guards, police, parole and probation officers and administrative staff.

Appendix I: Participant Demographic Information

| Location | Whitehorse | Dawson | Watson | Marsh Lake | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------|---------|------------|-------|-------|--|
| Respondents | 73 | 20 | 6 | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| Percentage | 70.87% | 19.42% | 5.83% | 3.88% | | | | | | | | |
| Age | 16-24 | 25-39 | 40-54 | 55-69 | 70+ | | | | | | | |
| Respondents | 14 | 52 | 37 | 1 | 0 | | | | | | | |
| Percentage | 13.59% | 50.49% | 35.92% | 0.97% | 0.00% | | | | | | | |
| Gender Identity | Cisgender | Two-Spirit | Man | Woman | Non-Binary | Trans | N/A | Other | | | | |
| Respondents | 32 | 6 | 21 | 44 | 13 | 9 | 1 | 3 | | | | |
| Percentage | 31.07% | 5.83% | 20.39% | 42.72% | 12.62% | 8.74% | 0.97% | 2.91% | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | Asexual | Pansexual | Bisexual | Queer | Gay | Questioning | Straight | Lesbian | Two-Spirit | N/A | Other | |
| Respondents | 3 | 10 | 9 | 27 | 25 | 2 | 29 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 4 | |
| Percentage | 2.91% | 9.71% | 8.74% | 26.21% | 24.27% | 1.94% | 28.16% | 8.74% | 0.97% | 0.97% | 3.88% | |
| Intersectionality | Dis/abled | Immigrant | Person of Colour | White | Indigenous | Refugee | N/A | Other | | | | |
| Respondents | 14 | 14 | 11 | 64 | 12 | 0 | 6 | 7 | | | | |
| Percentage | 13.59% | 13.59% | 10.68% | 62.14% | 11.65% | 0.00% | 5.83% | 6.80% | | | | |

Demographic information collected from those who participated at in-person engagements, including focus groups and community dialogues.

| How did you hear about tonight's engagement? | www.Engage Yukon.ca | QMUNITY Facebook or Newsletter | Facebook Event | Poster in Community | Print Ad | Radio Ad | Referral (friend or family) | Referral (service provider) | N/A | Other |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| Respondents | 15 | 15 | 41 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 40 | 10 | 1 | 20 |
| Percentage | 14.56% | 14.56% | 39.81% | 4.85% | 2.91% | 1.94% | 38.83% | 9.71% | 0.97% | 19.42% |

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| I felt safe contributing to the conversation and dialogue tonight | 3 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 86 |
| The topics explored were relevant and important to me | 2 | 1 | 2 | 27 | 72 |
| The discussion tonight allowed for meaningful reflection on past wrongs | 3 | 3 | 26 | 27 | 46 |
| The discussion tonight allowed for meaningful opportunities to look ahead and suggest how to change/move forward | 2 | 1 | 3 | 22 | 76 |
| I have trust this engagement will lead to larger governmental changes | 4 | 9 | 18 | 29 | 45 |
| I feel more connected to the LGBTQ2S+ Yukon community | 3 | 4 | 16 | 30 | 51 |
| My own understanding and knowledge of LGBTQ2S+ lived experiences increased as a result of this engagement | 4 | 2 | 18 | 34 | 46 |
| I would come to a future engagement and/or recommend a friend to attend a future engagement | 1 | 2 | 2 | 20 | 77 |

Those who attended in-person engagements responded to a number of statements within a “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” continuum. Responses are summarized above.



What we Heard

Public Engagement on LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion in Government Services

May 2019



Background

To ensure Government of Yukon is meeting the needs and priorities of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners, we initiated a territory-wide public engagement process in Fall 2018. The purpose was to identify ways to strengthen Government of Yukon legislation, policies, programs, services and practices.

This public engagement was designed and led by the non-profit organization, QMUNITY, which is based in British Columbia. QMUNITY focuses on improving the lives of LGBTQ2S+ individuals and has expertise working with LGBTQ2S+ communities.

The public engagement was greatly informed by findings from the [pre-engagement work](#) that took place earlier in the year. At that time, QMUNITY interviewed and met with LGBTQ2S+ community members and equality-seeking organizations to determine method, scope, duration, and design of the public engagement.

Engagement Process

Purpose

1. To provide multiple methods for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners and allies to participate safely and with dignity, including in-person, small and large groups, online submissions, travel and daycare subsidies, on-site counselling, and one-on-one meetings and/or written feedback at drop-off locations across the territory.
2. To address and explore key topics identified in the pre-engagement work, including: health, mental health and wellness; justice, safety and employment; and LGBTQ2S+ culture and community building.
3. To support and enhance the local capacity of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners to participate in leadership positions as co-facilitators and note takers for engagement activities.

Process

In November/December 2018, QMUNITY recruited LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners as co-facilitators and note takers. Each recruit went through training to orient them to the engagement and develop and refine skills.

In January 2019, QMUNITY hosted 12 focus groups and three larger community dialogues. Dialogues focused on specific topics, while focus groups were based on demographic identities and/or geographic locations.



Groups by Demographics

- One each in Watson Lake, Dawson City and Haines Junction
- Seniors/elders in continuing care
- Youth
- Youth workers, including educators
- Trans and non-binary (and families, loved ones, significant others)
- Queer Indigenous and/or Two-Spirit
- Newcomers
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and other women who have sex with women
- Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men
- Government of Yukon Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Working Group

Community Dialogues by Themes

- Health, Mental Health and Wellness
- Safety, Justice and Employment
- LGBTQ2S+ Culture and Community Building

Throughout January, individuals were encouraged to contact QMUNITY to register for focus groups, provide [written submissions to pre-drafted questions](#), request one-on-one meetings, arrange travel subsidies, or to communicate other needs in order to participate.

A draft of the What We Heard report was sent to participants and community partners to check if we got it right and if we missed anything. This final version incorporates their feedback.

What We Asked

Community dialogues and written submissions were structured to provide guided questions to generate further reflective and generative dialogue. The specific focus or questions shifted to reflect the lived experience and expertise in the room, depending on the individuals who showed up for each engagement. For a full list of questions used to generate dialogue, [you can review this document](#). Focus groups were provided an opportunity to explore topics and issues more relevant to certain demographics and/or communities. QMUNITY facilitators and local co-facilitators provided some guiding questions, but topics explored and feedback provided were ultimately based on the flow of conversation and engagement at focus groups.

What We Heard

The information below is a high-level review of identified and recurring themes heard through the engagement process.

Overall Feedback

- Providing education and training in LGBTQ2S+ cultural competency (e.g., respectful language; pronouns; visibly inclusive environments) is vital across many departments and sectors over the coming months and years. This can include in-person training workshops, the provision of print materials, and ongoing and recurring professional development. Some sectors identified as high-priority include educators, health care practitioners, and employers, including leadership within Government of Yukon.
- A cultural shift towards more acceptance is needed, which will require systemic and institutional leadership from Government of Yukon and associated professionals.
- Services provided to rural and remote communities outside of Whitehorse need to be person-centred, which includes mobile and active outreach to communities. Whitehorse cannot be the one and only space to access gender-affirming or queer-competent care in schools, health, and other services.
- Facilities like schools, hospitals, and other government buildings should include gender neutral washrooms with low-barrier access (e.g., a student does not need to ask for a key to get into the gender-neutral washroom).

Health Care

- Mental health and wellness was identified time and time again as a huge gap in health care services; while the engagement focused on LGBTQ2S+ experiences, it is worth mentioning that this sentiment was expressed within and outside of LGBTQ2S+ communities. Many suggested that mental health services are severely under-funded and unable to meet the needs of individuals and families requiring access to competent, holistic mental health services, LGBTQ2S+ and non-LGBTQ2S+ alike. This was especially pronounced among youth.
- Trans-competent health care is required, including extended coverage for hormonal therapy, gender-affirming medical procedures and surgeries, psychiatrists and psychologists, and appropriate and simpler referrals to other provincial health care providers for health care needs that are highly specialized (e.g., using cancer care model and referrals to Alberta and/or British Columbia similarly for trans care).
- Health navigator positions could be created to assess and assist individuals and their families as they access required health care. A patient-centred approach would ensure that Yukoners who have pre-established relationships with health care professionals could continue in these relationships, even if updated policies establish a different protocol ('grand-parenting' as an option during policy transitions).



- Technical and advanced training for health care practitioners was suggested for those serving trans and non-binary folk, including on issues of reproductive and sexual health, hormonal therapy, and gender-affirming surgeries and required after-care.
- Resources to support education and awareness-raising campaigns to better understand the health needs of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men to ensure they feel safe, supported and affirmed in articulating their health needs. This should include publicly funded PrEP and NPEP medications (a combination of daily medications that can either prevent the transmission of HIV, or effectively stop the transmission of HIV after potential exposure).
- Resources to support education and awareness-raising campaigns to better understand the health needs of queer women to ensure they feel safe, supported and affirmed in articulating their health needs.
- LGBTQ2S+ seniors/elders are an invisible population that could be served through awareness-raising campaigns in continuing care facilities and other services that serve an aging population.
- Access to information and resources are needed to help queer families navigate family planning, including fertility options, adoption and guardianship, and legal implications of multi-parental household arrangements (e.g., two mothers, one father).

Education and Youth

- While Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) policies have been updated to theoretically better support LGBTQ2S+ youth, many individuals, including teachers, suggested that many schools are unable, or unwilling, to implement SOGI policies, including supporting Gay-Straight Alliances.
- Bullying, misgendering (intentional and unintentional), outing youth and harassment were cited as common occurrences within school hallways and among peers. Anti-bullying initiatives are important and necessary for the well-being of *all* students.
- Extra-curricular programming, including sports and proms, reinforce the gender binary model. These extra-curricular programs can be more inclusive of queer relationships and diverse gender identities (e.g., an after-school girls' group is advertised for all self-identifying girls and/or feminine folk).
- Queer culture and programming currently happening, especially in Whitehorse, is by and for adults, but very little is available for youth.

Employment and Business

- Individuals working within the Government of Yukon who strive for inclusive programs, policies and practices to support LGBTQ2S+ employees and clients must have guaranteed support from their managers, school administrators, deputy ministers and so forth. This institutional leadership will positively shift cultural acceptance for communities, families and parents, and other service providers.

LGBTQ2S+ Culture and Community

- Territorial grants and government funding should include specific funds set aside to support the contributions of a lively, connected LGBTQ2S+ community.
- Specifically, provide funding to support the development of an LGBTQ2S+ resource/ community centre that is staffed to administer support and social groups, education and training services, youth programming, and other community-building activities and events.
- Make queer, trans and Two-Spirit inclusion a priority in other social service-related grants (e.g., in grants awarded to shelters, counselling, community service providers).
- In order to better support LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners living in communities, Government of Yukon should prioritize resources and supports to enable these individuals to connect with larger LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Additional feedback received outside of the public engagement

Conversion therapy

- Conversion therapy is the practice of trying to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity through counselling, behaviour modification or medication. It's based on the premise that being gay or trans is abnormal and can be "cured," which is inaccurate.
- Local high school students associated with the Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) presented a petition to Government of Yukon to ban conversion therapy for minors.
- In order to better protect Yukon youth, Government of Yukon should ban conversion therapy for minors in Yukon.

Health care

- There is a need to develop consistency in updating forms and changing information in files and records to be more LGBTQ2S+ inclusive.

Education

- Update Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity policy to ensure the use of gender pronouns, and update terminology to be trans inclusive.
- Ensure the collection, use, storage, and sharing of personal information is LGBTQ2S+ inclusive.

Employment

- Improve the Human Resources process to accommodate change of gender identity.
- Enhance mechanisms to ensure that document retention and credential changes are LGBTQ2S+ inclusive.



- Enhance procedures to ensure the collection, use, storage, and sharing of personal information is LGBTQ2S+ inclusive.

Housing

- Ensure Yukon Housing Corporation's Social Housing Program and loan programs are LGBTQ2S+ inclusive.

Policy areas

- Review human resources, client services, internal policies and existing processes to ensure LGBTQ2S+ inclusion.
- Ensure cabinet submission templates include LGBTQ2S+ and intersectionality under the significant implications section.

Communications

- Ensure use of inclusive terminology on websites and other communication materials.

Personal information and identification

- Amend Motor Vehicles Act to be more inclusive of all genders.
- Resolve identification management issues related to gender-inclusive identifiers for enforcement tools (licenses and legal documents).
- Create a consistent process for collecting gender information on Government of Yukon forms.
- Ensure surveys and data collection methods are gender inclusive.

Collaboration with communities

- Ensure tourism operators have access to training to make travel experiences and tourist facilities more friendly and appealing to LGBTQ2S+ travellers.

Participation

Engagement Methods

- Three community dialogues were held on specific topics.
- 12 focus groups were held based along demographic and/or geographic lines.
- One-on-one interviews were held with individuals, advocates and allies when scheduling did not allow for them to attend a focus group or dialogue.
- Online and/or written submissions to questions were posed via www.engageyukon.ca.
- Consultations took place with the Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) at Porter Creek Secondary and F.H. Collins.
- Consultations with the Government of Yukon Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity working group and Deputy Minister Steering Committee also took place.

Participation by the Numbers

- 110 attendees over the 12 focus groups and three community dialogues
- Four one-on-one interviews with individuals/advocates/allies
- 11 online submissions to www.engageyukon.ca
- Six co-facilitators who were LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners
- Seven note takers who were LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners

Notification and Outreach

QMUNITY and the Women's Directorate reached out to a number of identified stakeholders, individuals and groups who were encouraged to share the invitation with other interested organizations and individuals. Local co-facilitators and note takers were also encouraged to spread the word within their own networks.

A news release, radio ad, print ad, posters, and Facebook and Twitter announcements directed people to community dialogue event pages, and to www.engageyukon.ca with information about how to get involved.

What's Next?

Government of Yukon will use the information in this document to inform an online survey that will ask participants to rate the specific issues/actions with respect to their importance and impact. The online survey will be open in May and be available for four weeks.

Following the survey, we will develop an action plan to strengthen LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in Government of Yukon legislation, policies, programs, services and practices.



Appendix III: Terminology

Ally: A person who supports and celebrates LGBTQ2S+ identities, interrupts and challenges oppressive remarks and actions of others, and willingly explores heterosexist and ciscentric biases within themselves. Being an ally requires action: telling colleagues that their jokes are inappropriate; advocating for the health, wellness and acceptance of LGBTQ2S+ family members, etc.

Asexual: Someone who does not experience sexual attraction for other individuals. Asexuality can be considered a spectrum, with some asexual people experiencing desire for varying types of physical intimacy. This desire may fluctuate over time. Asexual people experience high levels of invisibility, trivialization, and pathologization. *Alternatives: Ace*

Bisexual/Biromantic: An individual who is attracted to, and may form relationships with at least two genders. Some bisexual people describe being bi as being attracted to men and women; some bi people consider it being attracted to their own and other genders. A bi person may feel equally attracted to each gender, or may experience stronger attractions to one gender while still having feelings for another; this ratio of attraction may vary over time. Bisexuality, like homosexuality and heterosexuality, may be either a period in the process of self-discovery, or a long-term identity.

Cisgender: Identifying with the same gender that one was assigned at birth. A gender identity that society considers to “match” the biological sex assigned at birth. The prefix cis- means “on this side of,” in reference to the gender binary model. A term used to identify people who are not trans, and the experiences of privilege granted on the basis of being cisgender

Coming Out: Or ‘coming out of the closet,’ is the process of becoming aware of one’s gender and/or sexuality, accepting it, and telling others about it. This is an ongoing process that may not include everybody in all aspects of one’s life. ‘Coming out’ usually occurs in stages and is a non-linear process. An individual may be ‘out’ in only some situations or to certain family members or associates and not others. Some may never ‘come out’ to anyone beside themselves.

Female-to-Male Spectrum (FTM): Generally used to refer to anyone assigned female at birth, and who identifies or expresses their gender as masculine all or part of the time. Some people prefer the term ‘transitioning to male’ (or male, man or trans man), as this does not imply that they were once female-identified.

Gay: A person who is mostly attracted to those of the same gender; often used to refer to men. *See also: Lesbian; Queer*

Gender: The social construction of concepts such as masculinity and femininity in a specific culture in time. One may identify as being a man, woman, or another gender. It involves gender assignment (the gender designation of someone at birth), gender roles (the expectations imposed on someone based on their gender), gender attribution (how others perceive someone’s gender), and gender identity (how someone defines their own gender). Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

Gender Affirming: A broadly applied term to describe any number of actions, behaviours or supports used in validating someone’s gender expression or identity. For example, a teacher who refers to a student by the pronouns they want people to call them is using gender affirming language.

Gender Affirming Garments: Any number of garments and/or physical aides used in affirming someone's gender. Most commonly, gender affirming garments might refer to binders, bras and breast forms, and may also be used to refer to wigs, gaffs, packers (penile prosthetics), and other textiles, garments and/or accessories.

Gender Binary: The view that there are only two totally distinct, opposite and static genders (masculine and feminine) to identify with and express. While many societies view gender through this lens and consider this binary system to be universal, a number of cultures recognise more than two genders. Across all societies there are also many folk who experience gender fluidly, identifying with different genders at different times.

Gender Dysphoria: A term introduced in the DSM 5, gender dysphoria replaces what used to be referred to as *gender identity disorder* (GID). Gender dysphoria refers to the internalized conflict and distress experienced by an individual whose assigned gender at birth, and the gender with which they identify, are different. Gender identity disorder is considered outdated and offensive (diagnosing a trans person with a disorder, simply for being trans); gender dysphoria is generally viewed as more appropriate, but there are many trans folk and their allies who believe the diagnosis is still problematic.

Gender Expression: How one outwardly expresses gender; for example, through name and pronoun choice, style of dress, voice modulation, etc. How one expresses gender might not necessarily reflect one's actual gender identity.

Gender Identity: One's internal and psychological sense of oneself as man, woman, both, in between, neither, or another understanding of gender. People who question their gender identity may feel unsure of their gender or believe they are not of the same gender they were assigned at birth. There is new, emergent and evolving language to capture a growing understanding of diversity in gender identities, including cisgender, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, non-binary, trans, and many more.

Gender Non-Conforming (GNC): A term under the trans umbrella which refers to people who do not conform to society's expectations for their gender roles or gender expression. GNC is frequently used to label other people, especially those who may not yet have the language to describe themselves (e.g. young children who are not conforming to society's expectations of their assigned gender). *See also: Agender; Genderqueer; Non-Binary; Pangender*

Genderqueer: A term under the trans umbrella which refers to people who identify outside of the male-female binary. Genderqueer people may experience erasure if they are perceived as cisgender. Genderqueer people who are perceived as genderqueer are often subjected to gender policing. *See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Non-Binary; Pangender*

Heteronormative: Refers to social roles and structures that reinforce the idea that heterosexuality is the presumed norm and is superior to other sexual orientations.

Homophobia: Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behaviour. There are many levels and forms of homophobia, including cultural/institutional homophobia, interpersonal homophobia, and internalized homophobia. Many forms of homophobia are related to how restrictive binary gender roles are (i.e, a lesbian who is harassed with homophobic language for being perceived to be masculine). Many of the problems faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual queer, and transgender

people, including health and income disparities, stem from homophobia and heterosexism. *See also: biphobia, lesbophobia, transphobia and queerphobia.*

Inclusive Language: The use of gender non-specific language (i.e. 'partner' instead of 'husband', or 'they' instead of 'she') to avoid assumptions around gender identity and sexual orientation, and to enhance the accessibility of information and services. Educational, social service, and health professionals are especially encouraged to use inclusive language until advised otherwise by the person they are talking to or about.

Intersectionality: A theory coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in the 1980s to draw attention to how different systems of oppressive structures and types of discrimination interact and manifest in the lives of minorities; for example, a queer black woman may experience oppression on the basis of her sexuality, gender, and race – and a unique experience of oppression based on how those identities intersect in her life.

Intersex: General term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy, genetics/chromosomes, or hormonal levels that do not seem to fit the 'typical' definitions of male or female. In many parts of the Western World, individuals who were born intersex had oppressive, non-consensual and/or unnecessary medical and surgical interventions, including gender reassignment surgery and aggressive hormonal therapy during childhood. 'Intersex' has replaced the term 'hermaphrodite', which is widely considered to be out-dated, inaccurate and offensive. An intersex person may or may not identify as part of the trans community, however the terms 'intersex', 'transsexual' and 'trans' are distinct and should not be used interchangeably.

LGBTQ2S: Acronym used to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Two-Spirit (2S) people. Additional letters, or a + sign, are sometimes added to this acronym (i.e. LGBTQ+, LGBTQI2S, etc.). Making fun of the length of this acronym can have a trivializing or erasing effect on the group that longer acronyms seek to actively include.

Lesbian: A woman who is primarily romantically and/or sexually attracted to women. The term originates from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos which was home to Sappho, a poet, teacher, and a woman who loved other women. *See also: Gay; Queer*

Male-to-Female Spectrum (MTF): Generally used to refer to anyone assigned male at birth and who identifies or expresses their gender as a female all or part of the time. Some people prefer the term 'transitioning to female' (or female, woman, femme or trans woman), as this does not imply that they were once male-identified.

Misgender: To refer to someone (especially a trans person) by using a word, like a pronoun or form of address (i.e. sir, ma'am), that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify. The act of misgendering can be done intentionally and with malice, or with ignorance; both are considered harmful. A related term, *ungender*, refers to the mental process by which a person tries to understand someone within a gender construct they don't identify with, most especially after learning about one's trans status.

Non-Binary (NB): A continuum or spectrum of gender identities and expressions, often based on the rejection of the gender binary's assumption that gender is strictly an either/or option of male/men or

female/women, based on sex assigned at birth. Non-binary can be both a specific term of identification, and/or an umbrella term. *See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Genderqueer; Pangender*

Outing someone: Accidentally or intentionally publicly revealing another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, trans status and/or relationship status without their permission. This can cause social, physical, emotional, or economic danger for the person being 'outed.' Outing someone can sometimes be done as an act of hate.

Pansexual/Panromantic: An individual who is attracted to and may form relationships with any or all genders. *See also: Bisexual/Biromantic*

Pronouns: A word used to refer to someone, without using their name(s). It is important to not make assumptions about the pronouns a person may use about themselves; in the same way you might introduce yourself with your name and then ask for someone else's name, you can do so with pronouns: Eg: "My name is Erika, and I use the pronouns they and them; I don't want to misgender you, can you let me know what your names and pronouns are?"

QTIPOC: An acronym for Queer, Trans, and Intersex People of Colour. Queer people of colour often experience intersecting oppressions on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation and other factors, including within queer and trans communities. Some literature may also use QTIBIPOC (Queer, Trans, and Intersex, Black and Indigenous People of Colour) to call attention to the specific mechanisms and impacts of oppression experienced by Black and/or Indigenous communities. *See also: Intersectionality*

Queer: A term becoming more widely used among LGBTQ2S+ communities because of its inclusiveness. 'Queer' can be used to refer to the spectrum of non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender people and provides convenient shorthand for 'LGBTQ.' It is important to note that this is a reclaimed term that was once and is still used as a hate term and thus some people feel uncomfortable with it. Not all trans people see trans identities as being part of the term 'queer,' and it is important to acknowledge the different histories of queer and trans communities.

Questioning: A term sometimes used by those in the process of exploring personal ideas of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as choosing not to identify with any other label.

Rainbow Flag/Colours: A symbol of queer presence, welcome, and pride which represents the diversity of queer communities.

Sex: Refers to the physical and physiological characteristics chosen to assign humans as male, female or intersex. It is determined by characteristics such as sexual and reproductive anatomy and genetic make-up.

Sexual/Romantic Orientation: Refers to a person's experiences of sexual and romantic attraction to other people, or to no one. Many people become aware of these feelings during adolescence or even earlier, while some do not realize or acknowledge their attractions (especially same-gender attractions) until much later in life. Many people experience their orientation(s) fluidly, and feel attraction or degrees of attraction to different genders at different points in their lives. Orientations are defined by feelings of attraction rather than behaviour.

SOGI: An acronym that stands for Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities; often used in institutional settings (i.e. health care or education), SOGI, or *SOGI Minorities*, is used in place of LGBTQ2S+ acronyms. SOGI may be preferred as it decreases the risk of erasure, since the LGBTQ2S+ acronym omits identities or terms of self-identification. SOGI as an acronym fails to capture the spectrum of romantic orientations, and intersex folk. *Alternatives: SGM (Sexuality and Gender Minorities)*

Transgender (Trans, Trans*): Transgender, frequently abbreviated to 'trans' or 'trans*' (the asterisk was intended to actively include non-binary and/or non-static gender identities such as *genderqueer* and *genderfluid*, but has fallen out of frequent use throughout the 2010s) is an umbrella term for a wide range of experiences and identities for people whose gender does not match with the gender they were assigned at birth. Identifying as trans is something that can only be decided by an individual for themselves and does not depend on criteria such as surgery or hormone treatment status. *See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Genderqueer; Non-Binary; Pangender*

Transition: Refers to the process during which trans people may change their gender expression and/or bodies. There are many ways a person may go about a transition, which can loosely be understood within three areas:

Social Transition – name and pronoun change, wardrobe or hairstyle, legal ID, etc.;

Medical Transition – including hormonal therapy;

Surgical Transition – including gender affirming surgeries.

There is no one 'right' or 'complete' way for someone to transition; it is rather best understood as a personal journey to support someone's health and happiness. As allies to people transitioning, one can practice generosity and openness by thinking of a transition as a *transition out of* a particular gender, rather than a *transition to* a pre-determined end-point.

Transsexual: Many folk feel that the word transsexual has medical overtones or is used inaccurately and so prefer the terms 'transgender' or 'trans.' A transsexual person may change elements of their body through surgeries or hormonal treatments.

Transvestite: A medical term that was historically used to label cross dressing as a mental illness and sexual perversion. This term is outdated, problematic, and generally considered offensive. *See also: Crossdresser*

Two-Spirit (2-Spirit): A term used by many Indigenous communities on Turtle Island (typically known as Canada & US) to describe people with diverse gender identities, gender expressions, gender roles, and sexual orientations. Two-Spirit people have been and are viewed differently across different Indigenous nations. Two-Spirit people were included and respected in most Indigenous communities, sometimes considered sacred and highly-revered. They often took on important roles as healers, mediators, and warriors.

Appendix IV: What We Heard (October, 2018)

Designing an inclusive public engagement process for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners

Background

We want to conduct a territory-wide public engagement process so that we can strengthen our legislation, policies, programs, services and practices to ensure we are meeting the needs and priorities of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. However, we recognize that there have been challenges in addressing issues that affect LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. In order to design a safe and inclusive public engagement process, we decided to undertake a pre-engagement initiative to learn more.

To conduct this pre-engagement, we worked with a consultant from the non-profit organization QMUNITY, which is based in British Columbia. QMUNITY focuses on improving the lives of LGBTQ2S+ individuals and has expertise in working with LGBTQ2S+ communities.

QMUNITY reached out to Yukon LGBTQ2S+ community members and equality-seeking organizations, including youth, First Nations and women's groups. A primary consideration was on how to ensure participants feel respected and safe when providing input.

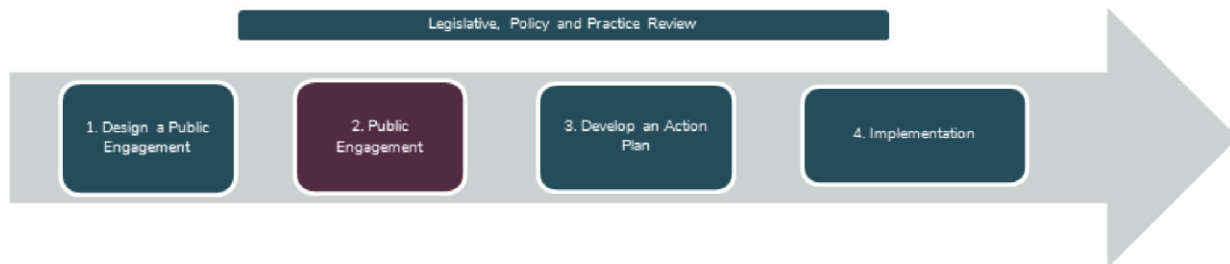
Engagement Process

Purpose – We asked how we could design a public engagement process so that people feel safe to tell us what issues and priorities are most important to them. This input will help us engage LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in a way that is accessible, confidential and inclusive. We also asked what priorities they would like to discuss in the next phase of public engagement.

Process – Feedback from this pre-engagement helped design a public engagement process that will identify actions that will ensure our legislation, policies, programs and services are as non-discriminatory and inclusive of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners as possible. We anticipate the next phase of public engagement will take place in stages over this winter.

What We Asked

- What are your priorities for LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in government services?
- How can we engage LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in a way that is inclusive, respectful, confidential, accessible and meaningful?



What We Heard

Pre-engagement helped us learn more about what areas of government services to prioritize and how to best engage LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in the future. Community members and allies identified seven priority areas for further discussion in the next phase of engagement:

- Health care delivery
- Education
- Creation of an LGBTQ2S+ advisor position
- Employment
- Identification and registration documents
- Business development
- Social isolation and connectedness.

Feedback also identified that a successful public engagement would include these features:

- A number of ways and formats to engage that are both accessible and safe, such as support to attend in-person dialogues with a travel subsidy, or to design the engagement to allow for more communities to participate in person through focus groups;
- Counselling and mental health supports at in-person engagement events;
- Ways to build local capacity to support LGBTQ2S+ inclusion and equity; and
- A discussion about gaps, barriers and inconsistencies in our services, policies and practices.

Analysis

QMUNITY recommended that in order to offer a safe and inclusive public engagement, we should provide a variety of opportunities to participate: written and in-person events.

QMUNITY also recommended that we could help meet the request to build capacity in the LGBTQ2S+ community by offering training opportunities for people to co-facilitate focus group discussions and act as note-takers. This will also help to ensure the focus groups are inclusive of northern LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

What's next?

We will conduct a full public engagement this winter using the advice we received from this pre-engagement. The public engagement will explore priorities for LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in government services and help inform an action plan. Participation will be safe, dignified and inclusive. We will provide several ways for people to participate.

Participation

Engagement Methods

QMUNITY received feedback from individual discussions with representatives from

Dawson Pride, the Public Service Alliance of Canada North Yukon Regional Pride Committee, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Youth Drop-In, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Women's Transition Home.

Participation by the numbers:

- In-depth discussions with representatives from seven organizations
- Two comments and three shares on the Facebook post
- Four retweets and nine likes on Twitter

Notification

QMUNITY sent emails to identified stakeholders, who were encouraged to share the invitation with other interested organizations and individuals.

A news release and Facebook and Twitter announcements directed people to Engage Yukon, with information about how to get involved.