

# Addressing knowledge gaps about skills of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada: A scoping review and qualitative inquiry

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## Executive Summary

In Canada and globally, there are economic disparities associated with sexual orientation and gender identity, wherein Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (2SLGBTQ+)<sup>1</sup> people are more likely than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts to experience poverty. While the reasons for these disparities are complex and not yet fully understood, employment-related factors are thought to be important contributors. In order to inform policy and programming to address employment experiences and outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada, this project aimed to address the following research questions:

- 1- What do we know about the foundational and transferable skill levels and employment outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ populations?
- 2- What are the main barriers faced by 2SLGBTQ+ populations to increasing their skill levels and further integrating into the labour market? Do women and/or gender diverse individuals in this group face additional barriers? If so, what are they?
- 3- What are some proven or promising practices or avenues to address these barriers and/or increase skill levels for 2SLGBTQ+ populations?
- 4- Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the skill levels of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada and/or employment barriers? If so, how? What are some of the long-term implications of the pandemic on the future of the 2SLGBTQ+ populations, its skill development, and employment outcomes?

To address these research questions, our team conducted two scoping reviews of the academic literature and 22 1:1 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders (e.g., 2SLGBTQ+ workers, employment service providers, employment advocates, and employers). With some overlap, the first scoping review addressed research question 1, the second scoping review addressed research question 3, and the qualitative study addressed all four research questions, in order to further contextualize findings from the scoping reviews and address current gaps in the academic literature.

### *Key Findings: Employment Outcomes*

Our review of the academic literature finds that **2SLGBTQ+ workers in Canada show disparities in a variety of labour market outcomes when compared to cisgender, heterosexual workers**, and that these disparities vary in magnitude across different sexual orientation groups and by gender. The disparities persist across diverse outcomes, including wages, income, hours worked, and work in specific occupational sectors. Specifically, men in same-gender relationships show worse labour force outcomes compared to men in different-gender relationships, while women in same-gender relationships generally fare better than women in different-gender

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<sup>1</sup> 2SLGBTQ+ is the acronym primarily used by our research team. At times, other acronyms, such as LGBTI, are used depending on the source being referenced. All these acronyms largely refer to the same population of sexual and gender minorities (i.e., Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex). Further, we place “2S” at the beginning of the acronym to 1, appreciate that Two-Spirit people were on the land prior to settler people and identities, and 2, to mark a commitment to reconciliation in our research. We acknowledge that Two-Spirit is a western term and can refer to gender, sexual orientation, or for other identities.

relationships (but worse than men regardless of partnership status). Transgender workers show consistently much worse employment outcomes compared to cisgender peers, and there is emerging evidence that bisexual individuals fare worse than both heterosexual and gay/lesbian peers. To date, Canadian population-based data have not had adequate sample sizes of 2SLGBTQ+ people to allow for detailed intersectional analyses (e.g., on the basis of variables such as race, citizenship status, or disability), but the limited available research suggests that these and other variables associated with employment outcomes in the general population are also important contributors to outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ people.

### *Key Findings: Barriers in Employment and Skill Development*

Both the literature review and the qualitative study indicate that **pervasive discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity is the primary barrier to employment and skill development for 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada**. This discrimination manifests both in ways that are explicit (e.g., in experimental audit studies showing lower rates of call-backs for resumes coded as belonging to sexual minority people) and in ways that are more covert (e.g., in repeated experiences of being “not the right fit” for hiring or promotion). While employment-related discrimination is a concern across the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrum, **trans and gender diverse people in particular report very high rates of employment discrimination, alongside structural barriers to employment** (e.g., associated with having a dead (former) name on documentation of credentials; difficulty accessing references for work experience prior to transition). 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada who are marginalized on other bases (e.g., race, socio-economic status, urban vs. rural geographical location, etc.) often report more persistent experiences of discrimination at these intersections. For many 2SLGBTQ+ people, this discrimination is encountered early in life (e.g., in non-supportive home environments and schools), resulting in barriers to education and training that have implications across the life course. At the population level, however, 2SLGBTQ+ people in fact have higher levels of education than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts. In large part due to structural barriers such as discrimination, this training and education does not translate into equitable employment opportunities.

At the same time as our research findings illuminated employment- and skill-related gaps associated with discrimination, our interview participants emphasized that **many 2SLGBTQ+ people have a wealth of skills to offer to Canada’s labour market: successfully navigating a discriminatory world requires skills such as creativity, flexibility, and adaptability, and many 2SLGBTQ+ people bring desirable skills and experiences related to equity, diversity, and inclusion**. That is, while some 2SLGBTQ+ people may indeed benefit from skills-development programs (e.g., to address skill gaps due to barriers to accessing education), for the majority of 2SLGBTQ+ people, the primary barrier is finding supportive workplaces that will value the variety of skills that they have acquired through both formal (i.e., education and training) and informal (i.e., life experience) means.

### *Key Findings: Promising Interventions*

Our literature review identified relatively few published evaluations of interventions designed to improve employment outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ people. Taken together with findings gleaned from the qualitative study, we can conclude that **there is a critical lack of interventions and supports designed to address the specific employment and skill-development needs of 2SLGBTQ+ people**. However, our research highlights some promising directions for future intervention development and intervention. First, employment anti-discrimination laws and policies have been associated with improvements in 2SLGBTQ+ labour-related outcomes, both when implemented at the level of government (e.g., federal employment non-discrimination legislation) and at the level of individual workplaces (e.g., corporate anti-discrimination policies). More general anti-discrimination legislation (i.e., not specific to employment), such as legislation permitting same-sex marriage, has also been associated with improved labour market outcomes for sexual minority people. However, evidence suggests that anti-discrimination policies must be implemented in ways that are enforceable and alongside other necessary interventions. Second, diversity and equity management policies implemented within workplaces have been associated with improved labour force outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ employees, including improved job satisfaction, work productivity, and improved feelings of trust in and commitment to one's employer. Third, there is some evidence that mentorship-based interventions may benefit 2SLGBTQ+ workers, particularly where the mentor is also 2SLGBTQ+-identified. Finally, there are a small number of studies that have evaluated interventions for 2SLGBTQ+ people who are unemployed; these interventions largely focused on skill building, empowerment, or both. While these evaluation studies included relatively small sample sizes and lacked comparison groups, they may suggest promising directions for the development of future 2SLGBTQ+-focused employment-related interventions.

### *Key Findings: Impacts of COVID-19*

**COVID-19 has significantly worsened labour outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals** globally, and this worsening seems to be disproportionately greater than that experienced by cisgender, heterosexual people. Participants in our qualitative study explained that given the economic disparities faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people pre-pandemic, COVID-19 likely exacerbated and compounded the poverty and unemployment that many 2SLGBTQ+ people were already experiencing. Further, though some participants saw the ability to work remotely as potentially positive to reduce exposure to discrimination, others noted that many 2SLGBTQ+ people did not have the material resources (e.g., laptop, wifi, private space) necessary to work from home. As a result of these same barriers, many 2SLGBTQ+ people were also unable to access employment programming during pandemic restrictions when it was required to be offered virtually. Participants also reported that isolation and poor mental health impacted many 2SLGBTQ+ people's capacity to find work during pandemic restrictions. Overall, participants felt that 2SLGBTQ+ people need what the broader population needs post-COVID: connection and economic security. However, societal discrimination and persistent economic disparities mean that significant investment may be necessary for these key needs to be met.

## Conclusions

In this report, we have identified significant knowledge gaps in relation to employment skills and outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada, while also highlighting key directions for future programming and policy interventions to address these gaps:

1. **More research is needed to better characterize employment skills, barriers, and experiences among 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada.** In particular, as a result of limitations of Canadian population-based data sources (e.g., lack of adequate data regarding sexual orientation and gender identity data in surveys related to income and employment; household-level data allowing only for analysis based on partnership status), we are unable to track outcomes for groups designated in legislation as deserving of employment equity, and our understanding of employment skills and outcomes for Two-Spirit, trans and gender diverse, and bisexual people is particularly limited. Sufficient sample sizes to allow for intersectional analyses are critical to understand how factors such as racism and ableism (among others) impact the labour market outcomes of 2SLGBTQ+ people. At the same time, additional qualitative research will be beneficial to further elucidate the unique skills that 2SLGBTQ+ life experience may bring, and how these skills can best be supported in the labour market.
2. **Dedicated resources are necessary to address the specific employment-related needs and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people.** Valuable supports and programming are already in place for other groups who experience barriers to employment; comparable investments need to be made within 2SLGBTQ+ communities.
3. **Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are the root causes of disparities in labour market outcomes associated with sexual orientation and gender identity, and so interventions to address discrimination and its impacts are ultimately what is needed to improve labour market outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ people.** Multi-level interventions – including elements at the policy (e.g., protections from employment discrimination), workplace (e.g., diversity and equity management practices), and individual (e.g., interventions to address gaps in skills) levels – are likely to be most effective. Well-designed interventions complemented with rigorous evaluations of outcomes will support effective policies and programs.
4. While discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation remains a concern in contemporary Canadian society, **discrimination on the basis of gender identity is widespread and has produced serious economic and employment-related disparities for many Two-Spirit, trans, and gender-diverse people.** Interventions to address this discrimination, and the associated rates of un- and under-employment among trans people, should be a priority.
5. Within all of these recommendations, **we urge an intersectional approach** that will address the specific employment-related barriers produced at the intersections of 2SLGBTQ+ identities and other important identities and experiences, particularly as they relate to Indigeneity, race, gender, and disability.

# Addressing Knowledge Gaps about Skills of 2SLGBTQ+ People in Canada: A Scoping Review and Qualitative Inquiry

## Arm 1: Literature Reviews

We completed two scoping reviews, focusing primarily on research question 1 (employment outcomes) and research question 3 (promising interventions), respectively. Both reviews used systematic searches reviewed by a librarian who specializes in employment, followed the PRISMA-Extension for Scoping Reviews guidelines (Ticco et al., 2018), and were managed through Covidence, a systematic review platform.

## Part A: Scoping Review of 2SLGBTQ+ Labour Force Outcomes

Research question 1 was addressed by updating the following published report, which was co-authored by one of our team members (L. Ross):

Waite, S., Ecker, J., & Ross, L. E. (2019). A systematic review and thematic synthesis of Canada's 2SLGBTQ+ employment, labour market and earnings literature. *PloS One*, 14(10). <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0223372>.

In order to update this review, we re-ran the systematic search used by Waite et al. (2019) for the years 2019 – March, 2022. Details of databases searched and search terms are available from the authors upon request. Included studies were required to be peer-reviewed and focus on 2SLGBTQ+ employment in Canada. This yielded 309 potential articles, of which 31 were screened in the full-text stage, and 9 studies included in the final data extraction. From these 9 articles, we extracted any data relevant to the project aims (e.g., employment outcomes, impacts of COVID-19, employment skills, training, barriers to employment). We also extracted these same data from all of the articles included in the original Waite et al. (2019) report (n=28, 1980-2019). Given insufficient Canadian data regarding impacts of COVID-19 on 2SLGBTQ+ employment, we supplemented these studies with an additional 3 articles addressing COVID-19 impacts in other countries, for a total of 40 total articles included in this review. Please see Appendix A for a table of all included studies.

## Results

2SLGBTQ+ workers in Canada show disparities in a variety of labour force outcomes when compared to cisgender, heterosexual workers. Multiple studies consistently find that men in same-gender relationships show worse labour force outcomes compared to men in different-gender relationships. Women in same-gender relationships generally fare worse or comparably to men in same-gender relationships, though their outcomes are generally better than women in different-gender relationships. Transgender workers consistently show much worse labour force outcomes compared to cisgender peers, and there is emerging evidence that bisexual individuals fare worse than both heterosexual and gay/lesbian peers. This is despite evidence showing that 2SLGBTQ+

workers generally have higher levels of education when compared to cisgender, heterosexual peers. COVID-19 has also worsened labour outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals internationally.

### Differences in Education and Income

**Multiple studies suggest higher levels of education amongst gay/lesbian and transgender individuals in Canada when compared to heterosexual or cisgender peers** (gay/lesbian: Allen, 2015; Carpenter, 2008; Cerf, 2016; Dilmaghani, 2018a; Dilmaghani, 2018b; LaFrance et al., 2009; Mueller, 2014; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Ferlatte et al., 2018; Gaspar et al., 2021; transgender: Bauer & Scheim, 2015; Irving & Hoo, 2020). Specifically, data using probability samples drawn from the Canadian census, General Social Survey (GSS), and/or Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), suggest that gay men and lesbians are more likely to have a post-secondary education when compared to heterosexual counterparts, with 40 percent of gay men (compared to 20 percent of heterosexual men) and 38 percent of lesbians (compared to 24 percent of heterosexual women) having post-secondary education (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015). However, data using probability samples of bisexual Canadians drawn from the CCHS data suggest that bisexual men and women have education levels similar to heterosexual peers (LaFrance et al., 2009). Recently released CCHS data from 2015-2018 largely confirm these findings, with gay men being more likely than heterosexual men to have a bachelor's degree or higher (43.2% vs. 30.3% respectively; Statistics Canada, 2022). Lesbians were more likely than heterosexual men to have a bachelor's degree or higher (37.7% vs. 30.3%), but no more likely than heterosexual women (37.7% vs. 34.9%, Statistics Canada, 2022). Bisexual men (35.7%) and bisexual women (33.5%) were no more likely than heterosexual counterparts (30.3% vs. 34.9%, respectively) to have completed a post-secondary education. No probability samples currently capture educational attainment for transgender Canadians. However, several studies of convenience samples (i.e., not necessarily representative of the population) suggest high levels of educational attainment (though there was no comparison to cisgender Canadians). For instance, 44% of transgender Ontarians who participated in the Trans PULSE survey reported a post-secondary education or higher (Bauer & Scheim, 2015).

**Despite higher levels of education, Canadian men in same-gender relationships have lower annual wages than men in different-gender relationships** (generally 12% less; Carpenter, 2008), suggesting a wage deficit (Brown, 1998; Carpenter, 2008; Cerf, 2016; Waite, 2015). Most recently, Waite (2015) showed a wage deficit in a probability sample of 6,350 men in same-gender relationships (compared to 592,875 men in different-gender relationships) using the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). Many available studies of population-based samples (i.e., Census) relied on data in which respondents could not explicitly self-identify as 2SLGBTQ+, such that researchers have made inferences based on the genders of household members, making bisexual people invisible (Cerf, 2016; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Carpenter, 2008). Although some studies find no income differences between men in same-gender vs. different-gender relationships (LaFrance, et al., 2009; Mueller, 2014; Dilmaghani, 2018a), without adjustment for education levels, a wage deficit may still be in fact be present (i.e., given higher levels of education, men in same-gender relationships would be expected to have higher incomes than men in different-



gender relationships). Indeed, wage deficits sometimes emerge after statistically controlling for education level (Mueller, 2014).

**Women in same-gender relationships generally have higher annual incomes when compared to women in different-gender relationships, suggesting a wage premium** (Brown, 1998; Carpenter, 2008; Mueller, 2014; Cerf, 2016; Dilmaghani, 2018a). Waite (2015) demonstrates this wage premium using data from the 2011 National Household Survey (which included 6,140 women in same-gender relationships and 607,415 women in different-gender relationships). **However, wage premiums for women with same-gender partners are often explained by other socio-demographic variables, such as differences in education, industry, and partnership status.** Wage premiums often disappear or significantly decrease when statistically controlling for these variables (Carpenter, 2008; Cerf, 2016; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015).

Household composition can also affect household income for individuals in same-gender partnerships (Carpenter, 2008; Cerf, 2016; Brown, 1998; Allen, 2015). Per 2006 Census data, men in same-gender households show higher household income than both women in same-gender households and individuals in different-gender households (Allen, 2015). That is, two men earners are likely to have higher household income than one man and one woman earner, as wage deficits for the two men earners are off-set by the wage deficits experienced by women in comparison to men.

**Bisexual men and women have the lowest incomes of any sexual minority group.** As noted above, fewer data are available to characterize the incomes of bisexual people, given that studies often rely on inferences based on the gender of one's partner. However, LaFrance et al. (2009) found, using CCHS data from 2001, 2003, and 2005, that bisexual women (n=722) had lower annual income when compared to both heterosexual women (n=89,486) and lesbian women (n=870). Similarly, bisexual men (n=517) had lower annual incomes than both gay men (n=1370) and heterosexual men (n=79,878). CCHS data from 2015-2018 suggest this trend is on-going, as bisexual men and women in this more recent probability sample showed lower income than both gay and heterosexual counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2022).

**Transgender Canadians show the lowest incomes of all sexual and gender minority groups,** albeit using convenience samples that may not be representative of the population (given that no population-based samples have been available; The Trans Pulse Canada Team, 2020; Bauer & Scheim, 2015, Abramovich, et al, 2020; Lacombe-Duncan, et al., 2020). For instance, a recent convenience sample of transgender Canadians (n=2837) found that 72% had annual incomes below \$50,000, with 40% living in a low-income household (The Trans Pulse Canada Team, 2020). Per Bauer and Scheim (2015), a significant number of transgender Ontarians may also rely on provincial disability pension (Ontario Disability Support Program), welfare (Ontario Works), or employment insurance (EI). Although the lack of Canadian population-based data is a serious limitation in this regard, these findings of low income, high levels of poverty, and high reliance on income support programs is consistent with population-based data from the US and elsewhere (Baker, 2019; Crissman et al., 2017).

## Hours Worked and Full Time Work

**Differences in other labour force outcomes, such as number of hours worked per week, rates of full-time work, and unemployment rates also emerge between sexual/gender minority groups and cisgender, heterosexual counterparts.** For instance, single, gay men are less likely to work full-time and work fewer hours than their heterosexual peers, per CCHS data (Cerf, 2016; LaFrance et al., 2009), whereas single lesbians (Cerf, 2016), show higher rates of full-time work and work more hours than heterosexual counterparts (Cerf, 2016; LaFrance, et al., 2009). Bisexual men and women are less likely to be working and less likely to work 50 hours or more a week than any sexual identity/marital status group (LaFrance et al., 2009). Transgender Canadians are also vulnerable with regard to unemployment, per convenience samples. The Trans Pulse Canada Team (2020) reported that 35% of respondents (n=2837) reported only part-time or temporary work, and 16% reported being unemployed. In a qualitative study of trans health providers (n=4), participants also reported working on contract positions or in alternative health, which required heavy workloads or working several jobs to improve income (MacDonnell & Grigorovich, 2012). Youth are also especially vulnerable with regard to these labour outcomes. 2SLGBTQ+ youth are over-represented amongst homeless youth in Canada (Kidd, 2021), and qualitative research suggests that many of these 2SLGBTQ+ youth may be unemployed, frequently receiving assistance from social welfare programs (Abramovich et al., 2021; Abramovich & Kimura, 2021).

## Occupational Differences

Occupational differences also emerge between sexual/gender minority individuals and cisgender, heterosexual individuals. For instance, same-gender households are less likely to show a gender-based division of labour with one partner staying home (Allen, 2015; Brown, 1998). Further, differences also emerge with regard to *self*-employment, per 2001 and 2006 census data, as well as 2011 Canadian National Household Survey data (Waite & Denier, 2016). In these samples, women in same-gender partnerships were 16.9% more likely than women in different-gender partnerships to be self-employed. After controlling for occupation, men in same-gender partnerships were roughly 10.2 percent *less* likely to be self-employed compared to men in different-gender relationships.

Emerging evidence suggests that sexual minority men may work in different occupations than heterosexual peers (Dilmaghani, 2018b; Waite & Denier, 2015; Cerf, 2016; Allen, 2015; Carpenter, 2008). Differences often emerge between men in same-gender vs. different-gender partnerships with regard to career choice, across multiple data sources. Whereas men in different-gender relationships more often chose occupations in manufacturing (Dilmaghani, 2018b; Carpenter, 2008), utilities (Carpenter, 2008; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015), and equipment operations (Carpenter, 2008; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015), science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM, Dilmaghani, 2018b; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2022), transport and trades (Dilmaghani, 2018b, Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015). Men in same-gender partnerships were more likely to choose careers in arts, culture,

recreation, and sports (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015); sales and service (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2022); management, business, finance, and administration (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Dilmaghani, 2018b; Statistics Canada 2022); health (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015); and social science/education/government service (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Dilmaghani, 2018b). Bisexual men were also less likely than heterosexual counterparts to be employed in trades (Statistics Canada, 2022).

Differences also emerge for sexual minority women. Women in same-gender relationships are overrepresented in social science, education, and government services occupations (Carpenter, 2008; Waite & Denier, 2015), law (Waite & Denier, 2015), manufacturing, utilities, and equipment operation (Carpenter, 2008), transport, trades, and primary industry (Dilmaghani, 2018b). However, they overlapped with women in different-gender relationships in the majority of employment categories (Dilmaghani, 2018b). Waite & Denier (2015) found that women in same-gender partnerships, though, were less likely than women in different gender partnerships to work in retail trade (Waite & Denier, 2015) and business, finance, and administration (Statistics Canada, 2022). Bisexual women were less likely than heterosexual women to be employed in health occupations (Statistics Canada, 2022).

**It is hypothesized that these occupational inequities may arise due to sexual/gender minority workers pursuing careers in which they anticipate less discrimination.** For instance, transgender healthcare workers have reported that they chose healthcare fields to avoid discrimination, as well as to protect their own health and to serve transgender patients (MacDonnell & Grigorovich, 2012).

#### Barriers to Workforce Participation: Pervasive Discrimination and Inequality

**Several studies provide evidence of pervasive employment discrimination on the basis of presumptive sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression,** and pervasive discrimination has emerged as a key explanation for the worse labour force outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians, despite overall higher levels of education.

First, multiple studies suggest that income disparities persist even when accounting for differences in occupation, differences in one's partner's occupation, education, household factors, and other socio-demographic differences (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015; Denier & Waite, 2017), leaving discrimination as one of the few remaining potential explanations for these income differences. Indeed, this conclusion is supported by experimental research. Most recently, Dilmaghani & Robinson (2022) show that blue-collar employers in Canada are less likely to extend an interview to a prospective welder if their resume indicates possible identification as 2SLGBTQ+. In particular, applicants who were men and identified as possibly 2SLGBTQ+ were least likely to receive a callback, whereas applicants who were women were equally unlikely to receive a callback regardless of possible identification as 2SLGBTQ+ when compared to cisgender, heterosexual, men applicants. Adams (1981) similarly demonstrated that resumes that identified candidates as 2SLGBTQ+ received fewer call-backs from Canadian law firms when

compared to presumably heterosexual peers; heterosexual men were 2.3 times more likely to receive a callback when compared to presumably 2SLGBTQ+ men, and heterosexual women were twice as likely to receive a callback compared to presumably 2SLGBTQ+ women.

Discrimination is also well-documented in some sectors of the economy. In Canada's Armed Forces, 34% of Regular Force members reported witnessing discrimination, with 62% of incidents directly attributed to sexual orientation and 58% attributed to gender identity (Cotter, 2016). High levels of discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression are also reported amongst Canadian samples of transgender and gender diverse people (Bauer and Scheim, 2015; Waite, 2021; Macdonnell & Grigorovich, 2012). For instance, Waite (2020) found that gender diverse federal employees were 2.5 times more likely to report experiencing workplace discrimination when compared to cisgender men in the prior two years. Discriminatory behavior can sometimes be overt, including anti-transgender bullying and harassment, intentionally using incorrect name and pronouns, and making inappropriate remarks (MacDonnell and Grigorovich, 2012). However, **discrimination and inequality may also be covert and hidden at times, enacted through non-verbal communication (e.g., cues of discomfort, anxiety, or social distancing) and verbal inferences (e.g., that one is "not a good fit" for the agency for unidentified reasons; Irving & Hoo, 2020).**

**2SLGBTQ+ Canadians may rely on a number of strategies to avoid discrimination, and needing to engage in these strategies can cause additional stress even if they reduce exposure to discriminatory behavior.** For instance, Bowring and Brewis (2009) have suggested that gay men and lesbian women frequently conceal their sexual minority status due to fears of differential treatment. In their sample, gay men and lesbian women often bifurcated their identities to present a counter-stereotypic "self" at work, thereby avoiding anticipated discrimination, if they came out at all. Similarly, gay men and lesbians cultivated relationships with different-gender peers in order to avoid stereotypical misperceptions that they were eroticizing same-gender co-workers or making romantic/sexual advances toward same-gender coworkers. Wells (2018) also provided qualitative data suggesting that transgender teachers (n=3) have experienced persistent discrimination in education, such that transgender women in Wells' study cautioned peers to expect anti-transgender discrimination and to scrupulously strategize to counter bias. 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians may also move from non-metropolitan areas (which show larger wage disparities, Denier & Waite, 2017) to urban locations within Canada in order to avoid worse discrimination in non-metropolitan locations (Lewis & Mills, 2016; Lewis, 2012). Transgender employees may also be expected to develop additional social/emotional skills when compared to cisgender peers in order to cope with discrimination. In a qualitative study including 44 semi-structured interviews with transgender workers, Irving and Hoo (2020) found that respondents felt an additional expectation to generate positive experiences for clients and co-workers, often framed as particular employment skills such as "emotional intelligence" and "teamwork".

**In addition to overt and covert discrimination, transgender people in Canada are faced with systemic discrimination: systems and institutions that are insensitive to transgender experiences.** For instance, transgender people may be "outed" if they are denied documentation

with their current name, pronoun, or gender designation (as for 28% of transgender Ontarians in requesting a reference from prior employers and 58% of transgender Ontarians who requested an academic transcript; Bauer & Scheim, 2015). Transgender healthcare workers may similarly be met with obstacles in registering as a health professional with major licensing bodies or applying to professional programs (MacDonnell & Grigorovich, 2012).

**2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada who are marginalized on other bases (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, urban vs. rural geographical location, etc.) often show worse labour force outcomes and report more persistent experiences of discrimination at these intersections.** 2SLGBTQ+ people of color may encounter pervasive racism that exacerbates unemployment due to increased discrimination (Gaspar et al., 2021; Adam & Rangel, 2015; Lewis, 2012). Irving and Hoo (2020) note that transgender people of color may feel marked pressure to “compensate” for trans-antagonism and racism in the workforce by obtaining additional training certificates and education, as well as using additional social communication skills, such as persistently smiling to convince employers, co-workers, and clients that one is friendly and unthreatening. **2SLGBTQ+ immigrants to Canada may also experience barriers to employment pertaining to immigration-related stressors,** such as lack of recognition of foreign credentials and work experience, restricted economic opportunities, pervasive racism, and social devaluation (Adam & Rangel, 2015; Irving & Hoo, 2020). Several studies also suggest that 2SLGBTQ+ individuals who move from non-metropolitan to urban locations may encounter exclusion from 2SLGBTQ+ urban communities (Lewis, 2012; Lewis & Mills, 2016), such that they may return to non-metropolitan areas and “recloset” themselves.

### COVID-19 Impacts

COVID-19 has significantly worsened labour outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals globally, and this worsening seems to be disproportionately greater than that experienced by cisgender, heterosexual people. For example, in a global, cross-sectional survey drawing from 136 countries, Adamson et al. (2021) found that 50% of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (n=13,358) reported that they were not able to completely meet basic needs, with 25% reporting that they had needed to skip or cut meals in the context of COVID-19 and 13.7% of respondents indicated that they had lost their job as a result of COVID-19. However, no comparison group of cisgender, heterosexual individuals was recruited. Mendes and Pereira (2021) found in their Portuguese sample of 1,577 professional or academic workers, that cisgender, heterosexual participants reported higher general well-being, career satisfaction, better working conditions, and lower workplace stress when compared to 2SLGBTQ+ respondents in the context of COVID-19. 2SLGBTQ+ respondents also showed more fear of COVID-19 and more negative impacts related to COVID-19, and lower work-related quality of life relative to cisgender, heterosexual participants.

### Summary

2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada differ from cisgender, heterosexual peers in a number of ways with regard to labor force outcomes, and these differences provide indirect evidence of pervasive

discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Despite having overall higher levels of education than cisgender, heterosexual peers, 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada often show lower or comparable income. For instance, men in same-gender relationships generally show lower income than men in different-gender relationships (Cerf, 2016; Waite & Denier, 2015; Carpenter, 2008; Waite, 2015). Though women in same-gender relationships show higher income than women in different-gender relationships (Cerf, 2016; Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015), these differences significantly decline, if they are not erased, when controlling for other differences. Though studies have not controlled for levels of education, occupation, etc. when considering the income of bisexual men and women, these variables are often consistent with those of heterosexual peers. As bisexual people are the lowest earners of any sexual minority group, discrimination likely contributes to their income. Transgender people in Canada show the lowest income of sexual and gender minority groups, which is also attributable to discrimination. 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada may make different occupational choices than cisgender, heterosexual peers (Dilmaghani, 2018b; Waite & Denier, 2015), partly due to expectations of discrimination in certain sectors (MacDonnell & Grigorovich, 2012). COVID-19 has likely worsened economic stressors, as 50% of 2SLGBTQ+ people were not able to meet basic needs in the context of COVID-19, per a recent international study (Adamson et al., 2021).

In addition to indirect evidence of discrimination, there is Canadian evidence of direct discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in blue collar fields (Dilmaghani & Robinson, 2022), as well as on the basis of gender identity/expression (Waite, 2021; Bauer & Scheim, 2015). 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians draw on a number of strategies to mitigate discrimination in the workforce (Ross, et al., 2018), such as presenting oneself in counter-stereotypic ways (Bowring & Brevis, 2009), moving to metropolitan locations that are expected to be less discriminatory (Denier & Waite, 2017; Lewis, 2012; Lewis & Mills, 2016), and presenting with additional social/emotional skills to assuage prejudices (Irving & Hoo, 2020; Wells, 2018). 2SLGBTQ+ people are even more likely to use the latter, compensatory strategies when also confronting racism or other forms of marginalization in the workforce (Gaspar et al., 2021; Adam & Rangel, 2015; Irving and Hoo, 2020).

## Part B: Scoping Review of Interventions to Improve 2SLGBTQ+ Labour Force Outcomes

The second scoping review focussed on 2SLGBTQ+ employment interventions implemented across OECD countries. This scoping review protocol underwent review by a work and health librarian and its methods and objectives are described in a published protocol that can be found here: [https://osf.io/vdy5g/?view\\_only=82159857ef7548c883156fa27944d9ff](https://osf.io/vdy5g/?view_only=82159857ef7548c883156fa27944d9ff). Our scoping review of journal articles publishing original, empirical research across seven databases, including APA PsycInfo, Medline, CINAHL PLUS with Full Text, Business Source Premier, EconLit, Cochrane Library, and Sociological Abstracts, initially identified 4,046 journal articles for title/abstract screening, of which 112 met criteria for full-text screening. Forty-eight were identified for full data extraction. Please see Appendix B for a table of all included studies.

### Results

Most studies in the review confirmed that covert and overt discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression are a global concern. Even where legal and organizational protections exist, **2SLGBTQ+ employees continue to report exclusionary/discriminatory behavior from coworkers**, including homophobic jokes and verbal and physical assault directed to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (Willis, 2009; Kelly et al., 2021; Aaron, 2011; Dozier, 2015; Colgan et al., 2007; Compton, 2016). 2SLGBTQ+ workers internationally often developed similar strategies to Canadians in managing discrimination, such as not disclosing their sexual/gender minority status in order to avoid discrimination (Kelly et al., 2021), choosing to leave employers (Willis, 2009; Sabharwal et al., 2019), or working harder to avoid discrimination (Aaron, 2011). Regardless, interventions identified within our scoping review analysis aligned with the following four themes: **employment anti-discrimination policies, diversity/inclusion policies, mentorship, and interventions for unemployed 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.**

#### Employment Anti-Discrimination Policies

Employment Anti-Discrimination Policies often succeed in improving workforce outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ employees at the level of government mandate (i.e., law) as well as at the workplace level. **Anti-discrimination law meaningfully predicts labour force gains for 2SLGBTQ+ employees**, though research has generally been limited to the United States. However, as the United States is comprised of a number of localities that have or have not passed anti-discrimination laws (there are no explicit federal protections on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/ expression), the country offers ample opportunities for comparisons. For instance, Klawitter (2011) identified 35,827 men and 33,077 women in same-gender partnerships via 2000 U.S. Census data. Men in same-gender partnerships showed income penalties compared to men in different gender partnerships, though differences in annual income were significantly attenuated in states and/or cities in which there was an anti-discrimination law that explicitly included sexual orientation. Similarly, Burn (2018) found in a sample including the American

Community Survey data from 2008-2014, the 1990 U.S. Census 5% Sample, and the 2000 U.S. Census 5% Sample, that men in same-gender partnerships (n=44,143) showed wage penalties compared to men in different-gender partnerships (n=6,128,130, their income was 12.6% lower). However, that penalty attenuated by 2014 by 4.7%, and states with an Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) saw a decline of 10.2% (states with no ENDA saw a small increase in the wage penalty, 0.2%). However, there were no similar effects for lesbian women (n=26,340) in comparison to heterosexual women (n=5,016,785). Martell (2014) also demonstrates in a sample of men completing the U.S. General Social Survey (GSS) from 1994 to 2010 (n=4154), that men who endorsed having had sex with men worked roughly 15-20 more hours per week and were 7% likelier to be employed in U.S. states that had ENDAs, compared to men in states with no ENDA. Similarly, Leppel (2016) demonstrated, using data from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey in the United States, that transgender women (n=1,948, 22%) were more likely than transgender men (n=1,323, 15%) to be out of the labour force, and were less likely to be employed (67% vs. 75%, respectively). However, transgender men were also more likely to live in states that carried state-wide anti-discrimination protections. Tebbe et al. (2019) also show that in a sample of 175 transgender and gender non-conforming working adults, that experiences of workplace victimization (e.g., being verbally harassed, threatened with being outed, experiencing physical harm, or unwanted sexual contact on the basis of gender identity/expression) predicted participants' attitudes about work, more generally. However, these experiences no longer predicted attitudes about work in states or cities that offered anti-discrimination protections, suggesting that anti-discrimination laws may also support more positive attitudes toward the workplace.

**Even though only a minority of employment discrimination case filings on the basis of gender identity/expression or sexual orientation (15%) led to a benefit for the plaintiff (Baumle, 2020), anti-discrimination laws may directly reduce discriminatory behavior.** First, only human resource managers from areas without antidiscrimination laws show homophobic bias when evaluating prospective job applicants (Barron, 2009). Lab studies also confirm that the mere presence of an anti-discrimination law reduces discriminatory behavior. Barron and Hebl (2013) show that merely being told that there is an anti-discrimination law led participants (who played employers in a hiring vignette) to have more positive “job interviews” with presumptively 2SLGBTQ+ applicants. Similarly, participants who were told that they would be held accountable for job-related decisions later reduced homophobic bias when choosing a prospective job applicant (Nadler et al., 2014).

**Workplace anti-discrimination policies also improve labour outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ workers.** Tejeda (2006) found in a sample of 65 gay men in the U.S. that participants whose employer held a corporate anti-discrimination policy reported higher satisfaction with work, higher levels of organizational citizenship at work (i.e., they felt more belonging at work), and a better relationship with their supervisors. Day and Schoenrade (2000) also found in a sample of 744 American gay men and lesbian women that a workplace anti-discrimination policy predicted more affective commitment to the workplace, increased job satisfaction, and led to less conflict between one's sense of self at work and at home. Participants who showed higher affective commitment and less conflict between one's sense of self were also more likely to disclose their sexual



orientation in the workplace. In an Australian study, Aaron (2011) found that gay men (n=28) all identified their workplaces as having anti-discrimination policies that explicitly included sexual orientation and also broadly described their workplaces as gay-friendly, generally feeling accepted in their workplaces. Participants reflected that these policies communicated to gay employees that discriminatory treatment was unacceptable, such that they did not *need* to endure unfair treatment. 2SLGBTQ+ public school teachers (n=45) in one U.S. study actually described anti-discrimination policies as a prerequisite for even considering employment (Connell, 2012). However, this study also found that concerns about covert discrimination often led public school teachers to only come out slowly and gradually to certain coworkers, all coworkers, and sometimes everyone at school.

**Anti-discrimination policies may have unintended negative effects, despite demonstrated benefits, if they are not enforced.** In fact, the presence of anti-discrimination policies may lead to disclosure of one's 2SLGBTQ+ identity, making one vulnerable to discrimination if measures to counter discrimination are not enforced. Sellers (2014) notes that anti-discrimination laws and policies often do not have strong mechanisms for enforcement. Across 154 U.S. localities with anti-discrimination policies that address gender identity/expression, 78% established agencies to implement the policy, with only 46% actually giving these agencies authority to enforce policy. Only 31% offered assurance of privacy or minimal disclosure of personal information to protect the claimant, and 23% offered no safeguards to protect transgender employees making a discrimination claim. Lack of enforcement may explain paradoxical findings whereby the presence of anti-discrimination measures actually predict worse labor force outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ employees. For instance, Tejeda (2006) found that the presence of a corporate anti-discrimination policy led 2SLGBTQ+ employees to disclose their sexual orientation more often in the workplace, and especially to a supervisor. However, participants were also more likely to report a hostile work environment if there was a corporate anti-discrimination policy in place. Disclosure of one's sexual orientation to a supervisor also related to more hostile workplaces, lower perceived promotion opportunities, and significantly higher turnover intentions. Similarly, Leppel (2007) shows, using the 5% sample of the 2000 U.S. Census, that individuals in same-gender partnerships were more likely to be unemployed in states or localities that held anti-discrimination laws, as there may be "too few employers willing to hire the large numbers of gay men and lesbians flocking to states with anti-discrimination laws" (p. 202). European 2SLGBTQ+ workers may anticipate poor enforcement of anti-discrimination measures, such that the presence of anti-discrimination measures actually predicts non-disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression in European studies. For instance, workplace anti-discrimination guidelines actually decreased the likelihood of being out at work in an Austrian study, whereas more comprehensive protections (e.g., having a labour management antidiscrimination contract, works council, and 2SLGBTQ+-friendly workplace) all predicted being out at work (Markovic et al., 2022). Similarly, a study including 952 Swiss lesbian, gay, or bisexual participants showed that having a workplace with an 2SLGBTQ+ supportive policy actually predicted increased mental health problems and did not affect rates of discriminatory behavior, with some (25% of individuals with LGBT-supportive employers) feeling that anti-discrimination policies were mostly rhetorical and ineffective (Lloren & Parini, 2017). Taken together, these findings suggest that anti-discrimination policies may only be effective if they are meaningfully implemented and enforced.

Beyond the employment-specific anti-discrimination policies described in the prior section, more general legal and policy protections for 2SLGBTQ+ people have also been demonstrated to have an impact on employment-related outcomes. Policies that encourage diversity and inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (rather than simply prohibiting discriminatory behavior) emerged in our review as a significant measure to improve labour outcomes. These policies were sometimes expressed at the state-level, through laws that include 2SLGBTQ+ individuals within mainstream institutions. However, 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion was also often implemented at the level of the workplace via Diversity and Equity Management (DEM) policies. We discuss each of these two forms of diversity/inclusion policy in turn.

**Introduction of legislation that mandates the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in mainstream institutions, such as the passage of laws permitting same-gender marriage, have significantly improved labour force outcomes.** For example, using 2008-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) data, Sansone (2019) found that the passage of same-gender marriage laws increased household income, increased employment rates, increased hours worked per week, and increased full-time work for same-gender couples (n=57,914). Similarly, Dimitrios (2021) found that the passage of same-gender marriage laws decreased federal filings of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Per ACS data from 2008-2010, same-gender marriage laws also increased the likelihood of receiving employer-sponsored health insurance (Gonzales & Blewett, 2014). Notably, laws permitting the inclusion of same-gender partners on employer-sponsored health insurance plans only improved health-insurance enrolments for women in same-gender partnerships in one Californian study (Buchmueller & Carpenter, 2012), whereas laws that permitted same-gender marriage improved coverage for both men and women in same-gender partnerships (Gonzales & Blewett, 2014).

Mann (2021) also found that laws supporting transgender individuals affected labour outcomes. Specifically, laws permitting the removal of surgical requirements for change of gender on birth certificates increased employment rates for transgender men completing the Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance Survey from 2014-2019 in the U.S. (n=765), when compared to cisgender participants. However, no differences emerged for transgender women nor gender non-conforming people.

**Workplace diversity/inclusion policies and practices, including Diversity and Equity Management (DEM) policies, also significantly improve labour force outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ workers.** DEM policies encompass a wide umbrella. Hur (2020), drawing from the 2015 guidelines of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), suggests that five practices in particular define a 2SLGBTQ+-supportive workplace:

1. **Fairness:** explicit policy to support fairness/equality in the workplace
2. **Openness:** support from management and coworkers to be open about one's 2SLGBTQ+ identity
3. **Cooperation:** positive relationships with management and coworkers

4. **Empowerment:** feeling empowered as a 2SLGBTQ+ employee
5. **Support:** having networks of 2SLGBTQ+ support

Individual studies validate the U.S. OPM's principles (Hur, 2020) and suggest ways that these **FOCES** may be implemented to support 2SLGBTQ+ people in the workplace:

1. **Fairness:** Developing a written anti-discrimination policy (Colgan, et al., 2007); strong organizational policies and practices (i.e. health insurance coverage; Kelly, et al., 2021; Seiler-Ramadas, et al., 2021; Compton, 2016)
2. **Openness:** Sponsoring and supporting 2SLGBTQ+ organizations or events (Colgan, et al., 2007); using 2SLGBTQ+ supportive signage in the workplace (Kelly, et al., 2021); providing for the visibility and recognition of 2SLGBTQ+ identities (e.g., being able to talk about same-gender partners; Kelly, et al., 2021); explicit acknowledgment of the value of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (Dozier, 2015)
3. **Cooperation:** Running diversity awareness trainings (Colgan, et al., 2007); hiring 2SLGBTQ+-supportive supervisors (Kelly, et al., 2021); hiring other 2SLGBTQ+ coworkers (Kelly, et al., 2021); diversity management that emphasizes common ground between cisgender, heterosexual employees, and 2SLGBTQ+ employees (Kollen, 2016).
4. **Empowerment:** Establishing a lead person for 2SLGBTQ+ issues at the Board/Chief Executive level (Colgan, et al., 2007); having a 2SLGBTQ+ trade union support network (Colgan, et al., 2007).
5. **Support:** Developing a working group that includes 2SLGBTQ+ issues (Colgan, et al., 2007); establishing 2SLGBTQ+ network groups for support, consultation, and to inform policy (Colgan, et al., 2007)

**Studies suggest that DEM practices improve labour force outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ employees, including improved job satisfaction, increased work productivity, and improved feelings of trust and commitment in one's employer** (Wright et al., 2006; Pink-Harper et al., 2017; Tatum, 2018; Hur, 2020; Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Huffman et al., 2021). For instance, analyses of the US Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) have found that 2SLGBTQ+ federal employees reported higher job satisfaction, commitment to the job, lower turnover intentions, and higher perception that their skills were being effectively utilized when they perceived their workplace as cultivating diversity (Hur, 2020; Pink-Harper, 2017; Sabharwal et al., 2019). However, their turnover intentions were higher than heterosexual peers (n=354,268) regardless of work environment.

Other smaller studies have similarly identified positive effects of DEM practices for employment-related outcomes of 2SLGBTQ+ workers. For example, Colgan et al. (2007) found that the DEM practices used by 16 UK role-model organizations and businesses improved happiness and openness, feelings of confidence, freedom to speak, feelings of support, work productivity and effectiveness, and enjoyment of the job. Using the same 16 organizations as Colgan et al., Wright et al. (2006) found that DEM practices increased job satisfaction at these organizations, increased

“outness” at work, and also increased willingness to file a grievance if 2SLGBTQ+ workers encountered problems at work. Tatum (2018) found that a more affirming workplace culture increased the likelihood that 2SLGBTQ+ workers disclosed their sexual orientation and also improved job satisfaction. Finally, Capell et al. (2018) found that among 431 2SLGBTQ+ respondents across the EU, Israel, the US, and Latin America, trust in one’s manager was related to disclosure of one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression in the workplace.

Wang et al. (2018) provide emerging evidence that DEM policies may also affect income. In their study, gay men (n=118) and lesbians (n=116) completing the 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) in the UK showed improved income in companies that implemented DEM policies or practices.

DEM practices may be particularly impactful for transgender workers. Huffman et al. (2021) found that transgender-affirming behaviors in the workplace (e.g., use of gender affirming pronouns and titles) increased transgender employee’s (n=263) perceptions of supervisor and coworker supportiveness, as well as perceptions of a transgender-supportive organizational climate. In fact, support from coworkers and supervisors (e.g., use of gender-affirming pronouns and titles) led to improved job satisfaction and *life* satisfaction for transgender employees.

## Mentorship

**Mentorship, especially by a 2SLGBTQ+ mentor, can improve labour outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ workers.** For instance, Hebl et al. (2012) found that for 253 gay or lesbian participants in the Houston, TX area, having a mentor led to having more promotions than having no mentor at all. In fact, having a mentor sometimes led to having a higher salary, as well (Hebl, et al., 2012). Somerset (2011) paired 17 2SLGBTQ+ workers with 2SLGBTQ+ mentors for 10 months in West Yorkshire, UK. Participants all showed improvement in ratings of self-confidence, career development opportunities, skills development, network building, public sector knowledge, identification of training and development opportunities, conflict resolution, and self-respect for their identity after participation, compared to ratings before beginning mentorship (Somerset, 2011). Sanchez (2018) found that amongst 75 2SLGBTQ+ medical trainees, 23 of whom later participated in focus groups, mentorship contributed to more network building, 2SLGBTQ-related professional advice, and access to professional resources. Participants reflected that they especially valued mentors who were also 2SLGBTQ+, shared an understanding of personal/professional experiences, were honest, were present and available, had strong interpersonal skills, were knowledgeable and experienced, and demonstrated investment in their mentee’s success. However, Sanchez (2018) notes that health trainees may struggle to find mentors, as many health professionals may conceal their sexual/gender minority status. Wright-Mair and Marine (2021) observed that 11 2SLGBTQ+ faculty of color at a U.S. university valued prior mentors, as the latter helped them to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness. Many reflected that prior mentors had held high expectations, which helped young scholars to develop into faculty themselves. However, participants who had ineffective mentorship noted that they had felt set back or delayed in reaching their career goals, sometimes even feeling “sabotaged” (Wright-Mair & Marine, 2021).

**Researchers and health practitioners also sometimes developed novel interventions to support 2SLGBTQ+ individuals who are out of the labour force or unemployed.** Our scoping review identified five such programs: Work2Prevent, HOPE, Prevention Case Management (PCM), iTEAM, and Green Chimneys. While the evaluations of all five programs included relatively small sample sizes and lacked comparison groups, they may suggest promising directions for the development of future 2SLGBTQ+-focused employment-related interventions. In fact, these programs often relied on one of two foci: skills building or empowerment.

**Several programs emphasized skills-building as a strategy to support 2SLGBTQ+ individuals who were unemployed.** For instance, Hill et al.'s (2022) Work2Prevent program invited participants (n=87) to complete 4 sessions of group workshops adapted to “increase individual income and independence.” Themes generally addressed skills that participants could use to successfully complete a job search, such as assessing readiness for work, goal setting, identifying strengths, communication skills, networking, job searching, preparing job applications, and interview skills. Upon completion, Work2Prevent participants reported more hours of work per week, higher job-seeking self-efficacy, and less transactional sex work. Similarly, Hergenrather et al.'s (2013) HOPE intervention with HIV-positive, unemployed, gay men used 7 weekly group sessions to support participants' goal-setting skills, problem-solving skills, and employment seeking behaviours. Three months after completion, participants (n=7) reported higher self-efficacy of job-seeking skills and were more actively pursuing employment compared to their own ratings before participating. Nolan (2006) evaluated the Green Chimneys transitional-living program, which provided 10 beds to homeless or at-risk 2SLGBTQ+ youth in which youth are required to pay rent, attend meetings, and complete chores in an affirming environment. Youth were expected to work at least 20 hours a week and received training on resume writing, job interviewing, and job maintenance. The majority of participants (n=40) were employed after discharge.

**Other interventions emphasized empowerment of unemployed individuals living at the cultural margins.** For instance, Reback et al. (2012) “culturally tailored” Prevention Case Management (PCM) to specifically address the needs of transgender women. This approach supported transgender participants in making plans for the future based on their own evaluation of risk while also offering 10 sessions with a professional to develop individualized solutions that accounted for cultural difference. Being empowered to make a culturally-appropriate plan and identifying strategies to maintain related changes in their lives helped transgender participants (n=60) increase monthly earnings and decrease sex work as a primary source of income. Similarly, Stevens et al.'s (2020) iTEAM program used a strengths-based foundation to celebrate the importance of youth perspectives across diverse identities and viewpoints. When professionals used affirmative care that empowered 2SLGBTQ+ youth across agencies and integrated services (e.g., case management services, clinical services, education and employment services, housing services, and sexual health services), 2SLGBTQ+ youth (n=270) showed improved employment and housing stability at six-month follow-up.

## Summary

This scoping review revealed four interventions that significantly improved labour outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ workers. **Anti-discrimination policies**, both at the level of the state or municipality, as well as in the workplace, significantly closed income disparities, increased feelings of belonging at work, and also increased feelings of commitment to the employer. However, disparities may persist due to both covert and overt discrimination in the workplace, such that anti-discrimination policies sometimes may encourage 2SLGBTQ+ workers to disclose their sexual/gender minority status, thereby making them vulnerable to discrimination that is condoned in the workplace. **Diversity and Equity Management (DEM) policies and practices** are a vital corrective, as they supported 2SLGBTQ+ employees in feeling and identifying support from management and coworkers and feeling more empowered within the workplace. In fact, measures that include 2SLGBTQ+ individuals at the state level (like same-sex marriage laws) alone predicted improvement in labour force outcomes. **Having a 2SLGBTQ+ mentor** may also improve job satisfaction and other subjective outcomes, though emerging evidence suggests that having a heterosexual mentor led to the highest salaries and promotion opportunities for 2SLGBTQ+ workers (Hebl et al., 2012). **Psychosocial interventions emphasizing occupational skills-development and validation/ empowerment of marginalized perspectives** also showed promise in supporting the unemployed 2SLGBTQ+ workers.

**However, significant gaps remain with regard to these interventions.** A very limited suite of interventions has so far been evaluated, and it could be beneficial to look to interventions that have been shown to be effective in other populations that experience discrimination in employment to identify other potential interventions for future study. Further research must consider mechanisms used to implement and enforce anti-discrimination policy, in particular which mechanisms are most effective (e.g., legal protections for claimants of discrimination), how effective these mechanisms are, and in which circumstances. Especially with regard to corporate anti-discrimination and DEM policies, efforts should also be made to recruit large, representative samples in order to support generalizability of findings. Future research must also consider the influence of mentorship on more tangible labor outcomes, such as annual income and promotion rate, again with larger, representative samples. In addition, studies might also consider which intervention characteristics (e.g., validation/empowerment and/or skills-building) are most predictive of labour force gains for unemployed 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

Despite these gaps in knowledge, this scoping review suggests that clear anti-discrimination policy in tandem with policies that celebrate, empower, and support 2SLGBTQ+ workers are critical in improving labour force outcomes. Indeed, empowerment and cultural recognition may support unemployed 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in re-entering the workforce. Mentorship programs may support 2SLGBTQ+ workers in navigating unique forms of bias that they may encounter in the workforce. However, anti-discrimination and DEM policies are critical to eliminating bias before disparities in labour market outcomes will be dismantled.



## Arm 2: A qualitative investigation among key stakeholders: 2SLGBTQ+ worker, employer, advocate, and service provider perspectives on employment skills and barriers

### What did we do?

Given that many important gaps remain in the literature reviewed above, our team conducted a qualitative study to address outstanding questions, provide nuance to the available quantitative data, and offer further Canadian context to our understanding of potential employment-related interventions. Following approval by the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto, we conducted 22 interviews across four groups of key stakeholders: employers (i.e., executive directors, human resource staff, supervisors) of 2SLGBTQ+ workers, 2SLGBTQ+ employment advocates, 2SLGBTQ+ employment service providers, and 2SLGBTQ+ workers themselves. Of the 22 interview participants, most occupied more than one stakeholder group. For example, of the employers, service providers, and advocates interviewed, only one was not also a 2SLGBTQ+ worker themselves. However, broadly categorizing participants into the four key stakeholder groups, five were affiliated with advocacy organizations, six were employment service providers, five were employers, and six were workers.

While all four stakeholder groups offered important insights, speaking to 2SLGBTQ+ workers was particularly important to address the knowledge gaps. First, these interviews permitted insights into a life course understanding of barriers to training and employment that would not be possible to glean from other informants, such as employers, who typically know only a snapshot of an individual worker's story. Second, there is little existing 2SLGBTQ+-specific expertise or infrastructure within most employers or training organizations (a finding we further discuss below); thus, for some of our research questions, 2SLGBTQ+ workers themselves are the only individuals who can provide insights. Finally, 2SLGBTQ+ workers can provide nuance into intersectional experiences that cannot be fully understood by an employer or service provider who does not necessarily share their same identities. Thus, through speaking to 2SLGBTQ+ workers directly, we were better able to identify areas of need and opportunities for intervention across the life course to improve labour market outcomes.

We purposively recruited participants to ensure representation across the four key stakeholder groups and within the 2SLGBTQ+ communities who experience employment inequities at greater rates, such as those experiencing intersectional systemic marginalization (e.g., due to race or citizenship) as well as trans and non-binary people (given the very high rates of poverty and employment discrimination identified in our systematic review). There was representation from most provinces, including Eastern, Western, and Central Canada, and participants could collectively speak to local, provincial, and national perspectives. However, we did not have representation from Northern or rural Canada, nor from the Territories. There was representation across sexual orientation and gender identity groups; approximately half the sample identified as trans and/or nonbinary. As bisexual people are often not adequately represented in 2SLGBTQ+ employment-related research, we intentionally and successfully recruited bisexual participants. Approximately half the sample identified as racialized, including Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour.

Participants were recruited through professional networks of the research team, snowball sampling, and an environmental scan of 2SLGBTQ+ training/employment service providers and employment advocacy organizations in Canada. Interviews were conducted over phone or videoconference and followed a semi-structured interview guide probing for themes of 2SLGBTQ+ people's skills, training, and employment experiences, outcomes, and barriers. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. See Appendix D for full interview guides.

## Findings

Findings from the 22 interviews span insights on the skills and strengths of 2SLGBTQ+ workers, barriers to training and employment, employment outcomes, impacts of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and needed interventions. Below, we review the key findings for each of these five domains in turn.

### Skills and strengths of 2SLGBTQ+ workers

We asked participants to about skills and strengths of 2SLGBTQ+ people as they relate to employment. Participants unanimously felt that **2SLGBTQ+ people inherently bring a diversity of skills and perspectives to the employment setting due to their experiences of having to navigate a cisnormative, heteronormative world.** Doing so was said by participants to require **creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness** that was further honed through often having to navigate the margins of social life without access to surplus resources

(given the economic disparities faced by many 2SLGBTQ+ people), privilege, and associated cultural capital that comes with membership in a socially dominant group (i.e., cisgender, heterosexual people).

“Based on the life experiences we tend to have, I think that does lend to certain passions being really strong; issues around advocacy and social justice and betterment and social change. I think because of what we've experienced...that does lend to this motivation and this passion that can really impact positively any work that we do in those arenas.”

“I see people coming into this work [2SLGBTQ+ organizations] with the highest drive and the highest passion for work. And in those workplace contexts, at least from what I see, also bringing that part of your identity to the work in a way that enhances the work. And I think in that workplace environment, it's extra beneficial if you can be who you are without fear of discrimination or bias or harassment.”

**Care and empathy were also identified as skills that 2SLGBTQ+ people have honed through community solidarity (e.g., histories of community care in response to HIV/AIDS) and through widespread experiences of lacking familial and system supports** (i.e., not being able to rely on supports that would be available to most cisgender heterosexual people, and so providing informal and formal supports within 2SLGBTQ+ communities).

When 2SLGBTQ+ workers were free from discrimination and harassment and were able to feel safe at work, they were reported to be better able to demonstrate their wealth of skills; both those specifically related to their identity(ies), as well as more general skills that cisgender heterosexual workers may be



given more opportunities to demonstrate. Participants explained that 2SLGBTQ+ workers' competency, drive, and passion were able to be unrestrained in workplaces that are truly inclusive. Inclusive workplaces led 2SLGBTQ+ workers to go "above and beyond" because they were grateful to work in environments that were inclusive and safe (for many of our participants, a rarity). Several employers and service providers identified that 2SLGBTQ+ workers often overperformed and worked beyond expectations because they were both passionate about what they were doing and grateful for safe employment.

Several participants spoke to skills and strengths pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), identifying that **2SLGBTQ+ workers were more open and receptive to diversity and created safer workplaces for other marginalized groups, and therefore fostered better workplace culture.** Many participants spoke to 2SLGBTQ+ workers' passion for equity and social justice. These strengths were particularly discussed as present when participants were working in 2SLGBTQ+ organizations; however, workers' strengths were described as cultivated when in any workplace where diverse identities were respected and valued. Employers and workers shared that it was common for 2SLGBTQ+ workers to contribute to EDI initiatives in the workplace and take time to educate others about social issues. That is, not only did participants report that 2SLGBTQ+ workers brought diversity to the workplace directly, but they reported that 2SLGBTQ+ workers strengthened EDI practices given their motivation to improve the working conditions for others they worked with. One employer provided an example of a 2SLGBTQ+ staff person who started a lunch and learn series where colleagues could ask any questions, free of judgement, to a panel of 2SLGBTQ+ staff about 2SLGBTQ+ related topics.

Due to a lifetime of navigating cisnormativity, trans people are frequently required to adapt. One participant stated: "Innovating is a trans person's way of being."

Participant examples showed how 2SLGBTQ+ life experience could lead to unique skill development, including creativity, innovation, and flexibility required to navigate a discriminatory world. Further, participants spoke about the administrative and management skills necessary to be successful in non-traditional

"Trans skills are **transferable skills.**"

forms of employment such as sex work and gig work, which many 2SLGBTQ+ people were reported to engage in due to exclusion from the traditional labour market. 2SLGBTQ+ workers, service providers, and employment advocates explained that life experiences related to navigating safety and discrimination also often lead to strengthened emotional intelligence and an ability to get along well with people. Participants elaborated that **survival skills that are transferable to employment settings are learned through experiences unique to or particularly common among 2SLGBTQ+ people, such as being fiscally resourceful (due to economic disparities) or observing human behaviour for safety (due to experiences of violence and discrimination).** Across worker, service provider, and advocate groups, participants provided examples of homelessness and living in poverty as common experiences among this population that result in many transferable skills (e.g., resourcefulness, budgeting and "stretching a dollar", navigating a scarcity of resources). Participants provided another example common among 2SLGBTQ communities, and specifically trans communities: sex work. Though true for 2SLGBTQ+ communities more broadly, participants stressed that **many transgender people report that sex**

**work provides a viable employment alternative in the face of widespread discrimination in other employment settings, and here, transgender people obtain essential skills in office administration, finances, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and marketing.** However, translating those skills as sellable features in the traditional labour market was said to be a challenge for many due to the stigma associated with sex work in Canada (intersecting with stigma experienced by trans and non-binary people associated with their gender identities).

Other skills developed in response to 2SLGBTQ+ life experiences identified by our participants included **resiliency, being acutely aware of social situations, being “a bridge between two worlds” (i.e., understanding multiple perspectives), advocacy skills from having to fight for most opportunities, and being adaptable and able to navigate challenging situations.** However, our participants highlighted that 2SLGBTQ+ people are a heterogenous group, with vastly diverse experiences that impact their skills and strengths. As a result, the skills discussed here may be amplified for those facing intersectional oppressions, such as racialized or disabled 2SLGBTQ+ people. Further, 2SLGBTQ+ people with more axes of privilege, such as cisgender white lesbian women and gay men, may have different life experiences and not need to develop the same skills (e.g., resiliency) in order to navigate traditional employment. However, overall, our data suggest that many 2SLGBTQ+ people are uniquely positioned to contribute to the Canadian labour market.

#### Barriers to skills and training

One of our initial aims was to identify skills gaps among 2SLGBTQ+ people to better understand specific areas for support and training. However, we were unable to identify specific skill gaps through our interviews. The

“We don’t have skills that are missing, we have barriers.”

majority of participants challenged the notion of a skills gap among 2SLGBTQ+ people, articulating that the inequitable employment outcomes of 2SLGBTQ+ people are about more than just skills. For example, one participant sarcastically nodded to this, stating, “... queer people aren’t just like not having jobs because they can’t use Microsoft Word... Like it’s not that, [laughs] it’s not that simple.” 2SLGBTQ+ people do not have an inherent skills gap, and in many situations have a wealth of skills – as evidenced by our scoping review finding that these

“We don’t have a skills gap. We just don’t. We have a skills wealth... The gap that we have is those skills [not] being recognized.”

communities have high levels of training and educational attainment (p. 8). However, participants shared various examples of how opportunities for skills building and demonstration of skills are restrained for many 2SLGBTQ+ people, as a direct result of the discrimination they experience. Participant discussions can be grouped into two main themes regarding 2SLGBTQ+ people’s skills: 1) 2SLGBTQ+ people experience barriers throughout their lives that restrict opportunities to building their skillsets, such as accessing education and mentorship. 2) 2SLGBTQ+ people have an abundance of skills that are not always recognized in traditional employment or workplaces where they are unable to be their authentic selves and subsequently share their skills.

Participants shared that 2SLGBTQ+ people's skills and training were impacted by the pervasive homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia that they, and those they have worked with, experienced within education systems and various other aspects of their lives, such as family relationships and social supports. Taking a life course approach is helpful to understand barriers to training, skill development, and employment among 2SLGBTQ+ people that participants discussed. Participants reported that 2SLGBTQ+ young people are exposed to cisgender and heterosexual discourses as normal from the time they are young. They spoke about barriers to fostering skills that occurred from the time young people came out, and for many, were kicked out or forced to leave their homes, resulting in the disproportionate number of homeless and underhoused youth who are 2SLGBTQ+. Participants spoke about **challenges with coming out and homelessness, together with bullying and discrimination in schools, led to barriers in education, employment, and skill development that were reported to be difficult to catch up from later in life.** Despite findings from the scoping reviews above that identify that some 2SLGBTQ+ groups, such as cisgender gay men and lesbian women, have higher rates of education, many participants in our study shared barriers to education due to issues of classism, racism, colonialism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

Participants stressed that 2SLGBTQ+ people do not have inherent gaps in their skillsets. However, **due to social exclusion across many facets of society, they experienced barriers to fostering robust skillsets and access to formal and informal training.** They expanded that many 2SLGBTQ+ people were delayed in starting their careers, as they had not had the same privileges (economic and otherwise) as those with familial and structural supports. One participant provided an example that 2SLGBTQ+ people are required to financially cover the costs of living and school after leaving home for safer environments. This experience had been the case for one worker, which left them unable to cover the cost of tuition and school supplies. The same participant explained that they had to drop out of school due to lack of money, leading to no formal qualifications. Further, when they attempted to attend postsecondary education, they could not dedicate enough time to study because they were focussed on survival (i.e., scraping together enough money for food and rent). Examples such as this were also echoed by employment advocates who have observed this time and again within 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Advocates and service providers elaborated that 2SLGBTQ+ people have high rates of homelessness and street involvement due to parental rejection and safety issues in the home. They explained that this leads 2SLGBTQ+ people to leave home earlier than cisgender heterosexual youth, which disrupts education and has significant impacts on 2SLGBTQ+ people's employment and earnings over the life course.

“...there were times where they didn't attend school or they had to be homeschooled because of the harassment they were experiencing...”

“So if you're struggling with your mental health...because of either a lack of acceptance or a lack of support, or unsure if you can come out or even like on the other side of that like explicit harassment and discrimination, that's going to impact how you can handle things like post-secondary or completing your high school degree.”

Further, some participants explained that the challenges that 2SLGBTQ+ youth experience growing up in oppressive environments impact their mental health and wellbeing. They expanded that it is common for 2SLGBTQ+ students to have to take breaks from or drop out of school. Service providers, advocates, and workers all shared that there are insufficient resources to support 2SLGBTQ+ people to manage the everyday discrimination and hardships that impact their mental health, limiting their ability to continue their training.

One 2SLGBTQ+ advocate spoke about someone they worked with for whom a lack of supports at school and home thwarted their opportunities to get an education. Furthermore, they noted that many 2SLGBTQ+ people would feel safer if they were to leave their hometowns and live outside of the family home but were often constrained due to either coming from a family who did not have the means to support this financially or were not supportive (i.e., anti-2SLGBTQ+) and therefore the youth did not have their own resources to attend university.

“...like if you can’t afford training or post-secondary or higher education because of [pause] being like from a family who’s, has a lower socioeconomic status or is living in poverty, then that’s going to impact your options and your choices.”

“...they went from like a shitty school life, decided to get home schooled, and home life was not at all better...they were experiencing inabilities to like get a good education and finish their education.”

Another aspect of training experienced prior to and during employment is mentorship. As discussed in the reviews above (p. 20), mentorship can support both personal growth and employment outcomes, including promotion and higher earnings. Participants reported that 2SLGBTQ+ people have fewer opportunities for mentorship, as people who provide mentorship often mentor people who resemble themselves. They explained that there is a lower probability of 2SLGBTQ+ people occupying positions of leadership – and the rising numbers of younger 2SLGBTQ+ people –

and that mentorship is less readily available for those looking to improve their skills and networks through mentorship.

“When people just can’t even have like the material basics to like, participate in society as it’s structured and you’re also queer and then you’re also dealing with like racism or like whatever it’s just like so much more, so much more.”

Other barriers to demonstrating skills occur when at the workplace and in interactions with the structural systems that shape the labour market. Participants challenged the notion that there is a need to address any skills deficits among queer and trans people and focussed on addressing the social conditions that constrain 2SLGBTQ+ people’s skillsets first and foremost. When asked about skills related to adaptability and creativity and innovation, one participant responded that “I think like the work force and H.R. and managers and the leaders of organizations have a whole lot more work to do themselves. Like I think queer

and trans folks are perfect the way they are, and we all uniquely have different skills, just like cis and straight people.” Another participant, an employer, questioned that even if any skill gap does

exist, is it fair to ask them to enhance their skills in a system that is racist, colonial, homophobic, and transphobic?

Finally, related to skills and entering the workforce, some participants shared that 2SLGBTQ+ people – and particularly trans and non-binary people – experience discrimination in hiring and promotion that for many had led to unemployment, underemployment, and/or precarious employment for either themselves or those they have worked with. Here again, participants were not speaking about a gap in skills, but unwillingness on the part of employers and potential employers to recognize the skills and experiences that 2SLGBTQ+ people can bring into the workplace.

“I think like there's so much work in the systems and structures of our society to make opportunities more equitable. There's a lot of like restructuring, a lot of unlearning, a lot of work that needs to be done so that the places in which we're trying to get our education and get our skills and training or work need to be like...doing a lot more work.”

### Barriers to employment

Participants identified many barriers to 2SLGBTQ+ people entering into and advancing through traditional employment. Some participants mentioned the history of pathologization and criminalization of 2SLGBTQ+ in Canada and specifically the Canadian labour market (see “The Purge” for one example: <https://lgbtpurgefund.com/>). Participants explained that there is a legacy of discrimination and prejudice toward 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canadian society that continues to be perpetuated in the labour market. Experiences of discrimination were experienced or observed by participants when 2SLGBTQ+ people enter into the labour market and seek employment as well as once in the workplace. We present the barriers participants described in four broad themes: entering into the labour market, barriers for trans and non-binary people, a history of social marginalization, and workplace discrimination.

“Layers upon layers of discrimination that you can't get out of.”

#### *Entering into the labour market:*

Echoing many of the same barriers that were identified through the scoping reviews (pp. 11-13), participants shared that 2SLGBTQ+ people faced discrimination when first entering the labour market, such as their resumes being passed over for various reasons (e.g., something that might “out” them, such as volunteering for a 2SLGBTQ+ organization; a lack of formal training due to barriers to attaining education). Discrimination was also reported in the hiring process due to not conforming to cisgender or heterosexual expectations (e.g., seen as unprofessional for not ascribing to gendered office attire). Participants shared that many 2SLGBTQ+ people present in ways that challenge normative definitions of professionalism through nonbinary or alternative expressions of gender. This impacted how some participants or those they worked with were perceived by potential hiring managers, who may choose not to hire someone who does not present the same way as others in the workplace. One participant articulated that in the job search process, **2SLGBTQ+ people are constantly told that they are “just not the right fit” despite simultaneously being told they are the best qualified candidate.** As a specific example, one

participant reported being told, “you’d be a really unconventional hire” when the only thing about the applicant that was “unconventional” was their transgender experience. Those who presented as visibly 2SLGBTQ+ and were not cisgender or straight passing reported especially facing barriers to attaining employment.

As a result of the barriers to formal training described above, participants shared that some 2SLGBTQ+ people build their skills through work experience. However, to access work and attain this on-the-job training, they explained that 2SLGBTQ+ people must start working in low-wage and informal positions and attempt to work their way up in organizations. This was clearly illustrated by one participant who was unable to complete their education and began working as a kitchen helper and work their way up to a cook. Participants explained that even when 2SLGBTQ+ people working in low-wage jobs may want to seek further training opportunities to improve their career prospects, they may face a lack of social/familial supports and safety nets to take the risk of leaving their job to receive further education. These experiences are further compounded among those who face intersectional marginalization, such as participants who immigrated to Canada and faced financial barriers to building their credentials in order to attain higher skilled jobs. Participants also spoke to the lack of representation of 2SLGBTQ+ people in leadership positions, resulting in fewer mentorship opportunities by 2SLGBTQ+ people for 2SLGBTQ+ people. This resulted in some 2SLGBTQ+ workers looking for employment primarily within 2SLGBTQ+ focussed organizations where those in leadership reflect their identities. 2SLGBTQ+ workers and service providers discussed how this not only limits potential for diverse networks and narrows employment opportunities, but it can also constrain 2SLGBTQ+ workers from building upon their skillsets outside of 2SLGBTQ+ organizations. Networking was identified by participants as a significant barrier to employment given that discrimination has prevented many 2SLGBTQ+ people from developing robust networks of people who can speak to their skills when they are looking for work.

A participant who had high expectations for themselves and dropped out of medical education due to affordability expressed:

“I have so many skills and aspirations and I’m working in home care – what a waste...It leads to a lifetime of sadness.”

“Many ways to build skills and get training beyond formal education, but many times people need to work for very low wage to then work their way up without the formal education.”

### *Barriers for trans and nonbinary people:*

Our interviews demonstrated that trans people have unique experiences that add complexity and barriers to employment. Social systems that 2SLGBTQ+ people navigate are deeply gendered, and the labour market is no exception. Participants spoke about the hostility of workplaces (policy and leadership) and coworkers that has constrained opportunities for trans workers. Advocates and employers identified that some trans people might delay entering into the labour market until they have reached particular milestones in their transitions, such as name changes or gender affirming surgeries, to reduce

visibility and subsequent discrimination. Material conditions, such as having limited financial resources, are directly related to these barriers due to the cost of documents or surgeries that participants explained could be prohibitively costly. Participants reported that because 2SLGBTQ+ people disproportionately experience poverty and low-wages, benefits packages can be particularly important. Unfortunately, several workers we spoke to did not have access to benefits and advocates and employers shared that most workplaces do not provide benefits or require at least they often require workers to pass probation periods to access benefits that might help them with managing stressors associated with transitioning to a new position (e.g., therapy) or help them with their transition through paid leaves or covering costs of surgeries. Furthermore, employers of 2SLGBTQ+ workers shared that benefits packages are inherently transphobic in what is covered and for whom. Employment advocates and employers shared that the gendered nature of workplaces and policies needs a complete overhaul to reduce barriers for trans and gender nonconforming workers. Primarily for but not limited to trans people, **participants shared that 2SLGBTQ+ people are pushed out of work in different ways, including consistently being misgendered, having to be outed in HR processes (e.g., legal documents not matching name), not having access to a safe washroom, being told they are too sensitive when addressing micro-**

“And like you know, that can include wanting to legally change your name or gender marker and having to pay almost 200 dollars to do that. And maybe not wanting to get a job with your current legal name, but wanting to get a job with the name that you go by and you can't pay for that.”

“...also like physical transition, you know, people might also not want to start going into the workplace uh before accessing hormones or, you know, top surgeries in particular or other surgeries. And so, you know, maybe facial feminization surgery isn't covered, for example. So like again, yeah it's these like other material things...”

“I guess I would start more like I think discrimination is much more the hatred that exists for trans and non-binary people is much more accepted in the context of workplaces. Um, it is much harder for trans people. Like, people being fired, people being systematically bullied out of their jobs, people feeling literally unsafe going to work. I'm not saying that that isn't an experience that queer, queer people or whatever. 2SLGB people experience, but I think. It's far more insidious for trans people. That exists in every context, I would say, like whether you're looking at the shelter system or whether you're looking at access to health care. Um, it is, it's just a more acceptable like kind of form of discrimination.”



**aggressions, hostile work environments, and limited legal recourse to escalate gender/sexual orientation-based discrimination claims.** Sexual and physical harassment were also identified as common issues among 2SLGBTQ+ people in the workplace that often go unaddressed. Further, participants reported that HR departments may not be trained in how to respond to issues pertaining to 2SLGBTQ+ people.

Participants across all groups – workers, advocates, employers, and service providers alike – spoke to the unique and pressing challenges faced by trans and nonbinary people. **While homophobia and biphobia remain concerns in the contemporary Canadian context, transphobia is even more pervasive and has profound impacts on employment experiences and outcomes for trans and non-binary people.** Participants shared that the disproportionate rates of poverty and underemployment are products of the diffuse and prevalent transphobia riddled within all systems, including employment, housing, and healthcare, among others.

*A history of social marginalization:*

**A strong theme across participants’ stories was the impact that a lifetime of feeling inadequate and lesser than –as a result of living in a homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic society- can have on one’s self-esteem and mental health. Participants shared performing at suboptimal levels due to worry that they weren’t good enough, despite no evidence of this.** One participant shared that he was fired from his job due to self-esteem and confidence issues that he directly attributes to a lifetime as an outsider due to his queer identity and now as a queer newcomer in Canada.

“...people who experience significant trauma do worse in relation to the labour market. And to know that queer and trans people are disproportionately traumatized in relation to especially early experiences is the reason why labour market attachment is more challenging. It's not about their identity as much as it is about the experiences they've had as marginalized people.”

Not only did experiences of invalidation and discrimination impact participants’, and those they worked with, mental health and therefore ability to complete education and training, but these experiences also impacted their success on the job market. Participants spoke to a “self-fulfilling prophesy” among 2SLGBTQ+ workers where they do not see themselves as good enough, particularly those who have been institutionalized at points in their lives (2SLGBTQ+ people experience high rates of hospitalization due to mental health issues, are

“...like the trauma of chronic invalidation that queer and trans people experience through navigating the world...Is there a way that you can like work, but like work from home or like work in a more supportive and more like trans positive environment? Or like kind of like or like how do we like work on emotional regulation skills to like help you manage like conflict and like transphobia that's going to come up in the workplace.”

“I don't think it's because of problems with employment policy [laughs], it's about those more fundamental issues of trauma, of, you know, family disconnection, of all the things that, like, make it very hard to just live in the world as a queer person is what makes everything else hard in many, many ways.”



disproportionately involved in the child welfare system, among other systems).

Further, advocates and employers added that 2SLGBTQ+ workers may feel as though they are “social misfits” as a response to trauma and discrimination and may fear being seen as a disappointment or getting into trouble due to living in a society where this has been their experience in the past. Two employment service providers discussed spending a lot of their training with 2SLGBTQ+ workers on emotional regulation skills and how to navigate micro-aggressions in the workplace. They explained that transphobia, homophobia, and biphobia are so prevalent that they impact how 2SLGBTQ+ workers are able to relate to their colleagues, respond to discrimination at work, and even their ability to get out of bed and go to work based on previous experience and anticipation of experiences to come. Lastly, one employment advocate shared that some 2SLGBTQ+ workers they know have required accommodations due to mental health challenges or disability, which 2SLGBTQ+ people experience at significantly higher rates than cisgender straight people, and are unable to get accommodations at work.

“[It’s] much more like the insidious part of how the world hates queer and trans people is why queer and trans people are unemployed, as well as all of the other things that disproportionately impact the community negatively.”

#### *Workplace discrimination:*

Other issues reported in maintaining employment and feeling optimism toward employment were the constant aggressions experienced commonly in the workplace (e.g., homophobic comments following “bring[ing] a partner to a social gathering or hav[ing] a family photo on our desks.”). Examples from participants illustrated that workplaces where 2SLGBTQ+ workers cannot be their authentic selves at work thwart opportunities to demonstrate skills, build relationships with colleagues, and be motivated/passionate for the work, further impacting retention of 2SLGBTQ+ employees.

“Can they bring themselves to the work? ...if yes, that's going to lead to better work culture, it's going to lead to this feeling of like you're a part of the work you're doing, you're a part of your workplace, you're accepted. And then if no, that's going to impact your motivation for your work, the engagement in your work, how you build colleague or collegial relations or interpersonal relations...”

Participants also explained that **2SLGBTQ+ workers may deliberately stay in a position without opportunities for advancement because they have found employment where they feel safe.** Further, they may feel gratitude towards their employer for an affirming environment and not leave/advance from the position, or will work tirelessly for that employer to show their appreciation for work that then may lead to burn out. They elaborated that even if an employer is not explicitly affirming and sometimes hostile, some 2SLGBTQ+ people will continue in this work environment to avoid the potentially more threatening process of looking for work, where discrimination is common.

**“Trans people are highly educated yet underemployed”** is a sentiment that participants shared that is also echoed in the academic literature. One participant, a 2SLGBTQ+ worker, explained that trans people are poorly represented in mainstream professions, such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers. They provided the following scenario for the complex reasons for this: a trans women with a job pre-transition will often lose her family and home after she transitions, which then leads to being homeless and, to survive economically, she goes into sex work. There is less stigma towards trans people in sex work, as reported by another 2SLGBTQ+ worker. This participant elaborated, “Most of my peers are in sex work.” Another participant, an advocate, articulated that **to get standard jobs, 2SLGBTQ+ people need to assimilate to corporate culture (i.e., a cisheteronormative culture) and give up being one’s authentic self for the sake of professionalism. The 2SLGBTQ+ people that are able to be successful are the ones who can assimilate to hostile professions that then do not utilize the unique skills and talents of 2SLGBTQ+ people.**

“It is either sex work, social work, or technology or online work.”

“Universities are more affirming, less rigid and conservative; but in the workplace, there is a lot more “isms” that make it hard for people to work as their true selves.”

Beyond overrepresentation in sex work, several participants identified patterns of observing 2SLGBTQ+ workers in non-profit and charitable work, as well as hospitality sectors. It was identified that these sectors can be more welcoming to 2SLGBTQ+ people. Conversely, participants shared that 2SLGBTQ+ are likely equally as interested in sectors like science and engineering but that these sectors are understood to be less accepting of 2SLGBTQ+ people. 2SLGBTQ+ people need to consider if sectors that are less accepting are viable, long-term prospects for employment. One participant explained that this employment pattern can also trace back to post-secondary education and what

“I think that's going to impact interest in going in there like a) do you see yourself represented in those higher up positions, like as a place for like goals and attainment? Um, are you going to feel like you're going to experience the support being who you are in your workplace?”

“You might not experience the dysphoria as much, like dysphoria can be within oneself, but it can also be heightened through relationality, depending on how people are interacting with you. And so, when you're interacting with more people, that can increase dysphoria.”

fields have more representation of and are safer for 2SLGBTQ+ people. Arts, humanities, and social sciences were identified by participants as safer than STEM fields for those making career decisions in college or university. Participants shared that decisions to enter into a field can be based on what others they know are doing for work in 2SLGBTQ+ communities and what the leadership structures are of sectors and workplaces – who is represented and who is not.

**Participants explained that customer-facing jobs can be particularly challenging for visibly 2SLGBTQ+**

**people** as the public is often unsure of how to interpret them. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia was reported to keep 2SLGBTQ+ people out of particular lines of work and often looking for work where they can hide (e.g., call centre, tech) or be valued (e.g., sex work). Therefore, 2SLGBTQ+ people's employment outcomes are severely constrained due to pervasive cisheterosexism in the labour market.

### Impact of COVID-19

Consistent with the scoping review findings (pp. 11-12), our interview data reveal that COVID-19 and pandemic restrictions impacted 2SLGBTQ+ people in ways similar to those described for the general population. However, participants explained that **given the economic disparities faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people pre-pandemic, the impacts were likely exacerbated and compounded the poverty and unemployment that many 2SLGBTQ+ people were already experiencing.** Further, though some participants saw the ability to work remotely as potentially positive to reduce exposure to discrimination, others noted that many 2SLGBTQ+ people did not have the material resources (e.g., laptop, wifi, private space) necessary to work from home. Some service providers found similar barriers with access to technology. They shared that many participants are experiencing poverty and housing insecurity which impacts their ability to participate in programming. When employment programming turned online during pandemic restrictions, service providers reported experiencing many barriers due to a lack of resources among their participants (unemployed 2SLBGTQ+ people), such as technology.

Participants also reported that **isolation and poor mental health impacted many 2SLGBTQ+ people's capacity to find work during pandemic restrictions.** One participant explained that COVID-19 isolation measures resulted in a lack of peer and community support, which for some 2SLGBTQ+ people, impacted their confidence to face the job market. This is particularly a concern for 2SLGBTQ+ people as a result of histories of discrimination and lack of support from families of origin. Overall, participants felt that 2SLGBTQ+ people need what the broader population needs post-COVID: connection and economic security.

### Interventions needed

Triangulating much of what was identified in the scoping review (pp. 15-21), it is clear that a multi-pronged approach is needed to address barriers to employment, skills, and training faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people. Despite often high levels of education, some 2SLGBTQ+ people face barriers to enhancing and applying their skills through a lack of mentorship, opportunities for further education, or advancement in the workplace. Further, even with robust skillsets, some 2SLGBTQ+ people unable to utilize their skills due to oppressive work environments. In line with the literature identified in our scoping review, interview findings demonstrate that interventions are needed at the social policy, organizational, and individual levels. Our participants articulated a variety of changes and interventions that are needed at all 3 levels in order to improve the labour market outcomes and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people. These data can be used alongside learnings from existing literature (pp. 13-21) to identify and develop interventions to address the employment and training needs of 2SLGBTQ+ people.

It is important to note that although employment-related interventions are needed, **all 2SLGBTQ+ people require adequate housing and financial security to be able to access and maintain education and employment.** This hierarchy of needs was expressed by

“There is no point looking at skills and employment if you’re not going to address housing and healthcare first.”

several participants who stressed that solely providing interventions focused on skill development would be

significantly inadequate. While this requirement to address basic needs is true for all people in Canada, the economic disparities associated with sexual orientation and gender identity (reviewed above, pp. 8-9) mean that this is particularly true for 2SLGBTQ+ people, and within that broad umbrella, most particularly for those who experience intersecting forms of oppression (e.g., trans women of colour). While employment-related interventions may indeed serve to at least partly mitigate the economic inequities, it is important to acknowledge that they must be part of a broader package of interventions to address economic, housing, health care, and other disparities experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ people.

Below, we discuss the interventions and promising practices at the social policy, workplace, and individual levels, respectively, that were identified by our participants.

#### *Social policy:*

At the social policy (macro) level, interventions to address discrimination, within and outside of employment settings, are necessary to change the social environment that is ultimately responsible for the exclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ people from the Canadian labour market. More details of the types and outcomes of these interventions have been provided above (pp. 13-14). However, as we have described in that section, even where policies and protections exist for 2SLGBTQ+ people, sexual orientation- and gender identity/expression-based discrimination persists (p. 13). One employer and 2SLGBTQ+ advocate explained that many employers may not know how or do not have the capacity to enforce policies and protections laid out in federal and provincial legislation.

In the process of carrying out this project, our team identified a significant gap in services and programs specifically to address 2SLGBTQ+ employment. Through online searches and consultation with our networks, we were able to identify employment supports for underrepresented groups at various levels of government (e.g., community college’s [Indigenous Student Services](#) and [programs for students with disabilities](#); [municipal Newcomer Strategies](#); Canadian government sponsored [Black Entrepreneurship Program](#)); however, **supports for 2SLGBTQ+ people in education and employment-related programming are severely lacking** and much less developed than the programming available to other underrepresented groups. There is need to “level up” 2SLGBTQ+ programming through explicit, funded supports and programs to parallel those available to other groups that face systemic barriers to training and employment.

### *Workplace:*

Aligning with the studies discussing DEM in our scoping review (pp. 15-21), participants spoke to the need for more inclusive workplaces, including increased representation of 2SLGBTQ+ workers at all levels and creation of more 2SLGBTQ+-friendly workplaces. There are some organizations within Canada that deliver trainings and workshops in this regard that were identified through interviews and online searches (e.g., Pride at Work Canada). However, participants were explicit that a single training/workshop will never be enough to shift organizational culture; ongoing learning as well as infrastructure changes (e.g., gender neutral washrooms) were said to be necessary to create 2SLGBTQ+-safe employment spaces. One employment advocate shared that **organizations that are inclusive of 2SLGBTQ+ people perform better**, driven by the diversity of thought and innovation that 2SLGBTQ+ people

“I think this work [research on 2SLGBTQ+ people’s skills] is important, of course, but I think the work force and H.R. and managers and the leaders of organizations have a whole lot more work to do themselves. I think queer and trans folks are perfect the way they are, and we all uniquely have different skills, just like cis and straight people have uniquely different skills, right? ...I don't think this is necessarily on the person looking for work to skill up necessarily. I think that workplaces are shitty in a lot of places and need to really do internal work and work on their workplace culture, how they're hiring, who they're hiring, their policies, their...all of that needs to be worked on.”

bring helping to address ineffective processes and drive change. Workplaces that actively value 2SLGBTQ+ people (e.g., have trans-inclusive benefits and policies, ensure EDI working groups that address 2SLGBTQ+ issues) were said to uplift 2SLGBTQ+ people to demonstrate their skills and encourage them to be actively engaged at work. Further, participants identified that having diverse gender identities affirmed (e.g., ensuring trans-inclusive language in the workplace) will allow trans, Two-spirit and non-binary people in particular to share their strengths. Other participants shared that being able to bring their authentic selves to work not only increases their motivation to do their job, but also to work towards fostering a more inclusive workplace. Participants challenged passive notions of EDI (e.g., one-off trainings or statements from leadership that diversity is important without action), identifying that there needs to be meaningful and ongoing organizational learning/changes specific to 2SLGBTQ+ workers for EDI principles to be put into action. This aligns with findings from our scoping review, highlighting that policies and practices need to be meaningfully regulated and enforced in order to be effective (see pp. 15-16).

2SLGBTQ+ workers and advocates expressed that many supervisors and managers have significant work to do to recognize and address their own internalized homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. They have been socialized, like much of dominant society, in a culture where minority sexual orientations and gender identities have been pathologized and marginalized, and as a result, where 2SLGBTQ+ people could be fired without cause. One example of the social environment that many in management have been socialized in discussed by a participant is The Purge, where the Canadian government carried out the deliberate identification and firing of 2SLGBTQ+ workers. Addressing pervasive cisheterosexism in the workplace culture, starting with those in leadership positions, is a necessary first step for workplaces to become meaningfully safe and inclusive for 2SLGBTQ+ people.



2SLGBTQ+ workers, advocates, and employers identified many practical recommendations and effective practices that have promise for improving organizational culture. We have organized these into three overarching themes: training and follow-through, improving 2SLGBTQ+ representation, and HR-related changes.

### Training and follow-through

Most participants expressed that there is a need for ongoing training that extends beyond a single session or only during Pride Month. Organizations, such as [Pride at Work Canada](#), were identified by participants that are able to support organizations to become more inclusive towards 2SLGBTQ+ workers through structured training. Not only will participation in this type of training likely improve workplace safety for 2SLGBTQ+ workers, participants explained that it would demonstrate to workers that workplaces/management are committed to 2SLGBTQ+ safety at work. In addition to training, participants posed several ideas for employers to reflect upon that would improve workplace safety for 2SLGBTQ+ people. The first was to reflect on notions of “Professionalism” and consider who these normative standards might inherently protect and work against. For example, one employer adopted a “come as you are”/“bring your whole self to work” approach, which included no dress codes. Another participant stated that employers should question their everyday processes to see who might be being excluded. They gave the example of keeping an open mind when hiring and question whether formal education is needed. As described above, many systemically marginalized groups face barriers to education and thus have different pathways to acquiring job skills. Lastly one employer challenged the traditional conception of “We have to hire the best person for the job.” They encouraged other employers to consider expanding what makes a certain person the “best” and to see diversity as an asset that might outweigh what could traditionally be seen as gaps or irrelevant. The employer reported, “What is best for a team is going to be diversity.” Summarizing these examples of reflecting on how to improve safety at work for 2SLGBTQ+ people, one employment service provider suggested that organizations conduct an audit of the ways in which an organization functions (e.g., policies, forms, bathrooms) through a gendered lens and assess how the organization can be more inclusive. Using existing audit tools to assess 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace is one way to do this.

### 2SLGBTQ+ representation

In addition to training, participants provided many examples of how employers might attract, attain, and strengthen their 2SLGBTQ+ workforce. Several participants spoke to diversity often being at the worker level and in more entry-level roles, with those with more privilege in positions of leadership. Participants explained that diversity at all levels of an organization is needed, including board, management, and workers in different teams. Further, working groups were identified by participants as important to address 2SLGBTQ+ staff-identified priorities. It was expanded upon that the labour of working groups extends beyond one or two 2SLGBTQ+ employees and should consider having a paid consultant to support this work, if feasible. Relatedly, other participants reported that EDI champions who have dedicated time for EDI-related work is important so that ideas for making a better/safer workplace can be brought forward through transparent, and potentially anonymous, means.

Some participant recommendations for improving representation related to hiring and onboarding of employees. One employer shared that they have started hiring on the basis of referrals of 2SLGBTQ+ workers in order to diversify their workforce. The same employer spoke

to the need to not tokenize 2SLGBTQ+ staff to be the “go to” 2SLGBTQ+ representative for all initiatives. Further, this employer has resources for people to make decisions about working at their company that are particularly helpful to systemically marginalized groups. These include transparency of staff composition (e.g., sharing information on company website) and having 2SLGBTQ+ employees available when interviewing potential employees to share information about 2SLGBTQ+ safety in the workplace. As identified in the scoping reviews, policies not focussed on anti-discrimination, such as affirmative hiring practices, can be effective to ensuring safety for 2SLGBTQ+ workers.

### Changes to HR

Participants shared that organizations wishing to improve their workplace for 2SLGBTQ+ workers should work to address homophobia/transphobia/biphobia immediately to demonstrate the values of the workplace. They could do this by addressing discrimination in all forms, subtle or overt, as some participants explained that employers do not always address concerns when brought forward. Further, participants explained that some organizations do not necessarily know how to ensure they are complying with human rights laws. Organizations could consider developing transparent policies and practices that align with those of racism or sexism in the workplace.

Related to hiring practices and benefits, employers provided several examples of how to attract and retain 2SLGBTQ+ workers. One employer from a company recognized for their diverse workforce shared that their HR department tracks demographic information about who is applying for a job to understand if recruitment was successful in attracting a diverse group. If recruitment did not attract a diverse group, this organization starts the recruitment process over and changes recruitment practices to reach a more diverse demographic (e.g., post ads on 2SLGBTQ+ job boards). Another hiring strategy that this same employer has adopted is considering non-traditional qualifications. They explained their awareness of the barriers that many marginalized workers experience that limit the talent pool for employers to hire from using formal and domestic education and experience. Several participants echoed the importance of these practices that were said to be particularly relevant for 2SLGBTQ+ workers who only have international education and/or experience.

Other employers of 2SLGBTQ+ workforces shared strategies for supporting their 2SLGBTQ+ workers through benefits. One participant shared that their organization starts workers' benefits the day they start work, as opposed to waiting three months. It was explained that given earning inequities, benefits will be especially beneficial to 2SLGBTQ+ workers, particularly those experiencing financial insecurity. Further, access to therapy or related benefits when engaging in a significant life transition (e.g., starting a new job) was said to be greatly beneficial and support a smoother transition. Relatedly, another employer shared that the minimum an organization can do is to ensure trans-inclusive healthcare is included in all benefits packages. Other benefits related practices were shared that did not specifically relate to 2SLGBTQ+ workers, though would particularly benefit 2SLGBTQ+ workers given some of the barriers identified above. One employer shared that they have moved to unlimited sick days and provide additional funds for mental health/wellbeing-related care that is not covered in a benefits plan. Relatedly, participants shared that employers (e.g., managers and supervisors) should be more understanding of medical leaves or unique life experiences that trans and nonbinary people may experience.

### *Individual:*

At the individual level, **training and support to help individuals address any potential skill gaps associated with disruptions in education or insufficient mentorship or advancement opportunities may be beneficial, as might trainings to build resiliency and advocacy skills necessary to be successful in workplaces where heterosexism and cissexism persist.** While many in 2SLGBTQ+ communities have already developed resilience and advocacy skills, others, and particularly young people, may not yet have

had opportunity or may face barriers to developing these skills, which in turn impacts their prospects as workers. Employment service providers reported that even those who have developed these skills through life experience may benefit from support in applying them to employment contexts specifically. They elaborated that until larger system change occurs via the macro- and meso-level interventions noted above, 2SLGBTQ+ workers need skills to navigate the micro- and macro-aggressions they will inevitably encounter in the labour market. Specifically, employment service providers identified that 2SLGBTQ+ people would benefit from pre-employment training programs that specifically focus on distress tolerance, shame reduction and trauma management, among other relevant topics as they relate to employment. To expand, employment service providers explained that shame and trauma that stem from adverse experiences earlier in life may impact negatively upon interpersonal dynamics at work.

“We do a lot of stuff around trauma, psychoeducation, how trauma works in the brain, what being triggered or emotional dysregulation can look like, how this might come up in a workplace setting, stress management skills, conflict de-escalation skills, you know, negotiation skills.”

Consistent with the results of our scoping review (p. 19), **mentorship was identified as critical to the success of 2SLGBTQ+ people in their career trajectories.**

Workers, employers, and service providers all explained that opportunities for mentorship by a supportive mentor, 2SLGBTQ+ identifying or not, are rare. 2SLGBTQ+ people are less often in positions of leadership to provide mentorship, and non-2SLGBTQ+ people in leadership are less likely to provide mentorship to 2SLGBTQ+ workers as a result of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in the workplace. Thus, there is need for both formal and informal mentorship opportunities, pre-employment and during employment. As identified in the academic literature, the lack of opportunities for mentorship that were discussed by participants may contribute to poorer work outcomes as well as personal growth for 2SLGBTQ+ people.

“...you need that like, like, really, really special mentor who like, might not be queer, might not be trans, but is like an incredibly inclusive and supportive person who is open to learning just as much from you about those certain aspects as you are about learning like workplace skills...”

### *2SLGBTQ+ Training*

In the research team’s attempts to recruit service providers working in 2SLGBTQ+ employment, it became clear that there is limited programming or supports to address skills, training, and employment among 2SLGBTQ+ people. Our team was only able to identify a few employment support programs across Canada, with most of these concentrated in Toronto. Of the few



employment programs we spoke to, participants highlighted that their 2SLGBTQ+ employment programs had limited budgets based on small grants that were awarded on a temporary basis. Further, some programs only existed because a worker at a social service agency advocated that they apply for funding for this issue as they saw the need in their community. Without these one-off programs, 2SLGBTQ+ employment programs would be even more scarce. However, there are some organizations that provide 2SLGBTQ+-related trainings to workplaces/employers, which our data suggest is likely a more necessary intervention, given that employment and skills trainings programs targeting the individual level will never have the desired outcomes absent the types of macro- and micro-level interventions we have suggested above.

### Summary:

Participants overwhelmingly rejected the notion that 2SLGBTQ+ people have an inherent skills gap and emphasized that, on the contrary, 2SLGBTQ+ people have a wealth of skills. However, despite these skills, some 2SLGBTQ+ people experience barriers to training and skill development throughout their lives due to homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia that impacts their ability to attend further education, attain mentorship, or advance within their work environment. Further, many of the skills that 2SLGBTQ+ people have are often not recognized in the labour market or their opportunities to demonstrate skills are thwarted in cisnormative and heteronormative environments where 2SLGBTQ+ people may feel unsafe and/or undervalued. Due to barriers to attaining skills and training and to demonstrating their current skillsets, 2SLGBTQ+ people's employment opportunities are restricted in the traditional labour market.

There is need to address barriers to skills, training, and employment among 2SLGBTQ+ people through a multi-pronged approach drawing on policy, workplace practices, and training and social supports. An “upstream” approach is necessary to address the structural conditions that thwart opportunities for 2SLGBTQ+ people, rather than solely focussing on building resilience and skills at the level of the individual 2SLGBTQ+ worker. Further, due to a lack of infrastructure to support 2SLGBTQ+ people and the employers that hire them, there is need to increase programming and resources to support 2SLGBTQ+ people navigating discriminatory training environments and labour markets, as well as to support organizations to align with contemporary human rights laws.

## Conclusions: Future directions to address employment skills and barriers among 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada

Our scoping review revealed both indirect and direct evidence of pervasive discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression that results in disparities in economic and employment outcomes. 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada do not receive income commensurate with their level of education when compared to cisgender, heterosexual peers (Cerf, 2016; Waite & Denier, 2015; Carpenter, 2008; Waite, 2015; Bauer & Scheim, 2015), and explanations outside of discrimination are insufficient to explain these gaps (Waite & Denier, 2015; Waite, 2015). In fact, both blue collar and white collar employers explicitly discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation (Dilmaghani & Robinson, 2022; Adam, 1981), and discrimination due to gender identity/expression is widely reported by transgender job seekers (Waite, 2021; Bauer & Scheim, 2015). Anti-discrimination measures significantly reduce discriminatory behavior (Barron & Hebl, 2013; Nadler, et al., 2014), as well as improve labour force outcomes (Klawitter, 2011; Burn, 2018). However, implementation and enforcement of anti-discrimination measures are necessary to ensure effectiveness. Both research literature and our own qualitative data indicate that diversity and equity management (DEM) practices (i.e., organizational policies that explicitly include and protect the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ workers) are critical adjunctives to developing open and supportive workplaces for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals (Colgan, et al., 2007; Hur, 2020). Mentors can also be useful in supporting 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in navigating bias in the workplace (Somerset, 2011; Sanchez, 2018), though our qualitative data indicate that opportunities for mentorship are currently insufficient. There is some evidence that programs emphasizing employment skills-building may have benefit for 2SLGBTQ+ people, and particularly those who are unemployed at the time of the intervention. However, these programs are likely insufficient to ameliorate the sequelae of pervasive workplace discrimination (i.e., income gaps and unemployment rates). Indeed, clear anti-discrimination measures, mechanisms for enforcement (Sellers, 2014), and DEM policies that support, include, and empower 2SLGBTQ+ workers may all be necessary to address labour force asymmetries. Further research must consider the scope, generalizability, mechanisms, and circumstances that produce labour market inequities and promote workplace equality for 2SLGBTQ+ workers.

Consistent with the scoping review findings, our qualitative data confirmed that 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada have a wealth of skills that may be under-realized due to lifelong inequalities in social supports, education, and employment. For instance, 2SLGBTQ+ people's social and communication skills may not translate into education and professional attainment to the same extent as for cisgender, heterosexual peers when one must use these skills instead to waylay coworkers' biases or navigate sex work in the context of family rejection and inadequate housing. Discrimination often presents early in life, in school settings replete with bias, interfering with educational goals for future 2SLGBTQ+ job seekers. However, alternative education models (e.g., home school) offer little relief when one's family shares homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic biases. Rather than use their many valuable skills to advance their careers, 2SLGBTQ+ job seekers often must use them to circumvent prejudice from biased coworkers and managers; in short, to maintain employment without opportunities for advancement. Many of our participants noted that workplace success required acceptance of a "hostile" workplace, even **"[giving] up being one's authentic self for the sake of professionalism."** As a result, 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians must use resourcefulness and other

resiliencies to mitigate discrimination in the workforce (Ross, et al., 2018; Bowring & Brevis; Denier & Waite, 2017; Lewis, 2012; Lewis & Mills, 2016). Encountering these widespread, compounded obstacles, even in the context of resilience and resourcefulness, often led to feelings of hopelessness and worsening mental health for study participants. In the words of one 2SLGBTQ+ job seeker, “it leads to a lifetime of sadness.”

In order to address the barriers identified from the literature and our qualitative study, our data suggest the **need for a dynamic, multi-pronged approach drawing on policy interventions, workplace practices, and training and social supports**. Our scoping review identified four key evidence-based strategies in this regard: comprehensive anti-discrimination protections, DEM practices in the workplace, mentorship programs, and training programs to address skills-building and empowerment. Our qualitative data contextualize these recommendations through identification of needs specific to the Canadian context, including:

- *Training to support employers in implementing federal and provincial human rights protections*
- *Training and support for employers to address internalized biases*
- *Implementation of equitable Human Resources practices, such as intentional recruitment of diverse candidates and expansion of eligibility for health benefits (i.e. health insurance activation from the beginning of employment)*

Despite significant advances in human rights protections in the decades since “The Purge”, 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada must still navigate homophobia, biphobia, and in particular, transphobia in their interactions with education, training, and workplace settings. These encounters with discrimination have resulted in persistent disparities in a wide range of employment-related outcomes, particularly for transgender and gender diverse people and those who experience intersecting oppressions (e.g., on the basis of race, gender, and/or disability). Given that Canadian social norms and values related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are the root causes of these disparities, eliminating them will be no easy feat. Doing so, however, will benefit not only 2SLGBTQ+ people, but also the Canadian economy and Canadian population as a whole, through enabling the integration of 2SLGBTQ+ peoples’ many skills, resources, and strengths into the Canadian labour market.

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Appendix A: Studies included in a scoping review of employment-related outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada

Authors	Year	Title	Source	Sample
Abramovich, A.; de Oliveira, C.; Kiran, T.; Iwajomo, T.; Ross, L.E.; Kurdyak, P.	2020	Assessment of health conditions and health service use among transgender patients in Canada	JAMA Network OPEN	ICES 2012-2016: 2,085 transgender participants; 10,425 age-matched cisgender participants
Abramovich, A.; Kimura, L.	2021	Outcomes for youth living in Canada's first LGBTQ2S transitional housing program	Journal of Homosexuality	13 2SLGBTQ+ youth living in Canada's first transitional housing program for 2SLGBTQ+ youth, operated by the YMCA of Greater Toronto.
Abramovich, A.; Pang, N.; Moss, A.; Logie, C.H.; Chaiton, M.; Kidd, S.A.; Hamilton, H.A.	2021	Investigating the impacts of COVID-19 among LGBTQ2S youth experiencing homelessness	PLoS ONE	61 2SLGBTQ+ youth
Abramovich, A. Pang, N.; Kunasekaran, S.; Moss, A.; Kiran, T.; Pinto, A.D.	2022	Examining COVID-19 vaccine uptake and attitudes among 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness	BMC Public Health	92 2SLGBTQ+; 15 key informants
Adam, B.D.	1981	Stigma and employability: discrimination by sex and sexual orientation in the Ontario legal profession*	Canadian Review of Sociology	82 Ontario law firms
Adam, B.D.; Rangel J.C.	2015	The post-migration sexual citizenship of Latino gay men in Canada.	Citizenship Studies	25 Spanish-speaking MSM from Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
Adamson, T.; Hanley, M.; Baral, S.; Beyrer, C.; Wallach, S.; Howell, S.; Survey	2021	Rapid, application-based survey to characterise the impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ communities around the world: an observational study	BMJ Open	13,358 2SLGBTQ+ individuals recruited via social networking application Hornet.



Development Team				
Allen D.W.	2015	Household production and sexual orientation.	Economic Inquiry	2006 Census: 7,196,020 men and women in different-gender relationships; 23,065 men in same-gender relationships; 19,585 women in same-gender relationships
Bauer G.R., Scheim A.I.	2015	Transgender People in Ontario, Canada: Statistics from the Trans PULSE Project to Inform Human Rights Policy [Internet]	Available: <a href="http://transpulseproject.ca/research/statistics-from-trans-pulse-to-inform-human-rights-policy/">http://transpulseproject.ca/research/statistics-from-trans-pulse-to-inform-human-rights-policy/</a>	433 transgender Ontarians
Bowring, M.A.; Brewis, J.	2009	Truth and consequences: Managing lesbian and gay identity in the Canadian workplace.	Equal Opportunities International	16 gay and lesbian workers from Ottawa, Vancouver and Montreal.
Brennan D.J.; Emlet, C.A.; Brennenstuhl, S.; Rueda, S.	2013	Socio-demographic profile of older adults with HIV/AIDS: gender and sexual orientation differences.	Canadian Journal of Aging	Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study (OCS): 117 women, 184 heterosexual men, 726 gay men, 76 bisexual men
Brown, C.L.	1998	Sexual Orientation and Labor Economics.	Feminist Economics	1991 Census data, sample sizes not included in publication.
Card K.G.; Armstrong H.L.; Carter A.; Cui, Z.; Wang, L.; Zhu, J. et al.	2018	A latent class analysis of substance use and culture among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.	Culture, Health, and Sexuality	774 MSM living in Metro Vancouver
Carpenter, C.S.	2008	Sexual orientation, work, and income in Canada	Canadian Journal of Economics	CCHS 2003, 2005: 194 gay men; 28,035 heterosexual men; 181 lesbian women, 28,145 heterosexual women  2001 Census: 33,765 men in same-gender relationships; 3,821,045 men in different-gender relationships, 38,481 women in same-gender relationships,

				4,191,505 women in different-gender relationships
Cerf, B.	2016	Sexual Orientation, Income, and Stress at Work	Industrial Relations	CCHS, 2003-2009: 875 gay men, 56,135 heterosexual men, 526 lesbians, 49,311 heterosexual women
Cotter, A.; Statistics Canada.	2016	Sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2016 [Internet]	<a href="http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/statcan/85-603-x2016001-eng.pdf">http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/statcan/85-603-x2016001-eng.pdf</a>	43,442 employees of Canadian Armed Forces
Denier, N.; Waite, S.	2017	Sexual Orientation Wage Gaps across Local Labour Market Contexts: Evidence from Canada	Industrial Relations/Relations Industrielles	2006 Census: 835,275 men in different-gender relationships, 6350, men in same-gender relationships; 5955, women in same-gender relationships; 787,737, women in different-gender relationships
Dilmaghani, M.	2018	Sexual orientation, labour supply and occupational sorting in Canada.	Industrial Relations	GSS, 2010-2014: 232 men in same-sex relationships, 18,330 men in different-sex relationships;
Dilmaghani, M.	2018	Sexual Orientation, Labour Earnings, and Household Income in Canada.	Journal of Labor Research	Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey (CADUMS), 2008-2012: 397 gay men, 26,059 heterosexual men, 304 lesbian women (n=304), heterosexual women (n=37,777)
Dilmaghani, M.; Robinson, M.	2022	The blue of the rainbow: queerness and hiring discrimination in blue-collar occupations	Review of Social Economy	2,000 Canadian employers
Ferlatte, O.; Salway, T.; Samji, H.; Dove, N.; Gesink, D.; Gilbert, M. et al.	2018	An Application of Syndemic Theory to Identify Drivers of the Syphilis Epidemic Among Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men.	Sexually Transmitted Diseases	7,872 GBMSM (Gay and bisexual men who have sex with men)
Gaspar, M.; Marshall, Z.; Rodrigues, R.; Adam, B.D.;	2021	Mental health and structural harm: a qualitative study of sexual minority men's experiences of mental	Culture, Health, and Sexuality	24 gay, bisexual, or transgender men

Brennan, D.J.; Hard, T.A.; Grace, D.		healthcare in Toronto, Canada		
Irving, D.; Hoo N.	2020	Doing Trans-Economic Justice: A Critique of Anti-Discrimination Laws and Inclusive Employment Policies	Canadian Journal of Law and Society	44 underemployed, transgender individuals from Ontario or British Columbia
Kidd, S. A.; Gaetz, S.; O'Grady, B.; Schwan, K.; Zhao, H.; Lopes, K.; Wang, W.	2021	The Second National Canadian Homeless Youth Survey: Mental Health and Addiction Findings	The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry	466 2SLGBTQ+ homeless youth; 909 cisgender, heterosexual homeless youth
Lacombe-Duncan, A.; Warren, L.; Kay, E.S.; Persad, Y.; Soor, J.; Kia, H.; Underhill, A.; Logie, C.H.; Kazemi, M. Kaida, A.; de Pokomandy, A.; Loutfy. M.	2020	Mental health among transgender women living with HIV in Canada: findings from a national community-based research study	AIDS Care	Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Cohort Study, 2013 to 2015: 1422 cisgender women living with HIV; 53 transgender women living with HIV
Lafrance, A.; Warman, C.; Woolley, F.	2009	Sexual identity and the marriage premium.	Queen's Economics Department Working Paper No. 1219	CCHS 2001, 2003, and 2005: 1370 self-identified gay men; 79,878 heterosexual men; 870 lesbian women, 89,486 heterosexual women
Lewis, N.M.	2012	Remapping disclosure: gay men's segmented journeys of moving out and coming out.	Social and Cultural Geography	48 self-identified gay men
Lewis, N.M., Mills, S.	2016	Seeking security: Gay labour migration and uneven landscapes of work	Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space	48 self-identified gay men

Macdonnell J.A.; Grigorovich, A.	2012	Gender, work, and health for trans health providers: a focus on transmen.	International Scholarly Research Notices Nursing	4 transgender men
Mallon, G.P.	2001	Oh, Canada: The experience of working-class gay men in Toronto.	Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services	10 working class gay men in Toronto
Mendes, C. & Pereira, H.	2021	Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Work-Related Quality of Life through the Lens of Sexual Orientation	Behavioral Sciences	1396 heterosexual individuals, 95 gay or lesbian individuals, and 87 bisexual individuals (all Portuguese-speaking).
Mueller, R.	2014	Wage Differentials of Males and Females in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Couples in Canada.	Canadian Studies in Population	GSS 2006-2010: 90 men in same-sex relationships; 13,931 men in different-sex relationships; 118 women in same-gender relationships; 11,380 women in different-gender relationships
Ross L.E.; Gibson M.F.; Daley A.; Steele L.S.; Williams C.C.	2018	In spite of the system: A qualitatively-driven mixed methods analysis of the mental health services experiences of LGBTQ people living in poverty in Ontario, Canada.	PLOS ONE.	704 2SLGBTQ+ women and trans people living below low-income thresholds
Waite S	2021	Should I Stay or Should I Go? Employment Discrimination and Workplace Harassment against Transgender and Other Minority Employees in Canada's Federal Public Service	Journal of Homosexuality	2017 Public Service Employee Survey: 235 gender minority participants; 68,453 cisgender men; 87,765 cisgender women
Waite, S.	2015	Does it get better? A quasi-cohort analysis of sexual minority wage gaps.	Social Science Research	2001 Census: 3,560 women in same-gender relationships, 544,940 women in different-gender relationships, 4,090 men in same-gender relationships; 587,075 men in different-gender relationships  2006 Census: 4,670 women in same-gender relationships, 568,935 women in different-gender

				<p>relationships, 4,790 men in same-gender relationships; 593,872 men in different-gender relationships</p> <p>2011 NHS: 6,140 women in same-gender relationships; 607,415 women in different-gender relationships; 6,350 men in same-gender relationships, 631,530 men in different-gender relationships</p>
Waite, S.; Denier, N.	2016	Self-Employment among Same-Sex and Opposite-Sex Couples in Canada: Sexual Orientation and Self-Employment in Canada.	Canadian Review of Sociology	<p>2001 Census: 3,560 women in same-gender relationships, 544,940 women in different-gender relationships, 4,090 men in same-gender relationships; 587,075 men in different-gender relationships</p> <p>2006 Census: 4,670 women in same-gender relationships, 568,935 women in different-gender relationships, 4,790 men in same-gender relationships; 593,872 men in different-gender relationships</p> <p>2011 NHS: 6,140 women in same-gender relationships; 607,415 women in different-gender relationships; 6,350 men in same-gender relationships, 631,530 men in different-gender relationships</p>
Waite, S; Denier, N.	2015	Gay Pay for Straight Work: Mechanisms Generating Disadvantage.	Gender and Society	2006 Census: 4,780 men in same-gender relationships, 593,710 men in different-gender relationships, 4,665 women in same-gender relationships; 568,405 women in different-gender relationships
Wells, K.	2018	Transgender Teachers: The Personal, Pedagogical, and Political.	Journal of Homosexuality	3 transgender teachers

Appendix B: Studies included in a scoping review of interventions to address employment outcomes among 2SLGBTQ+ people

Author(s) and Year	Title	Source	Country
Aaron, D.J. & Ragusa, A.T. (2011)	Policy implications of gay men's workplace experiences: public service employees in Australia's capital, Canberra	Policy Studies	Australia
Barron, L. (2009)	Promoting the Underlying Principle of Acceptance: The Effectiveness of Sexual Orientation Employment Antidiscrimination Legislation	Journal of Workplace Rights	United States
Barron, L. G. & Hebl, M. (2013)	The Force of Law: The Effects of Sexual Orientation Anti-discrimination Legislation on Interpersonal Discrimination in Employment	Psychology, Public Policy, and Law	United States
Baumle, A.K.; Lee Badgett, M.V. & Boucher, S. (2020)	New Research on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination: Effect on State Policy on Charges Filed at the EEOC	Journal of Homosexuality	United States
Buchmueller, T.C. & Carpenter, C.S. (2012)	The Effect of Requiring Private Employers to Extend Health Benefit Eligibility to Same-Sex Partners of Employees: Evidence from California	Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,	United States
Burn, I. (2018)	Not All Laws are Created Equal: Legal Differences in State Non-Discrimination Laws and the Impact of LGBT Employment Protections	Journal of Labor Resources	United States
Capell, B; Tzafrir, S.S.; Enosh, G. & Dolan, S.L. (2018)	Explaining sexual minorities' disclosure: The role of trust embedded in organizational practices	Organization Studies	EU, Israel, the US, and several other Latin American countries
Cathy J. Reback, C. J.; Shoptawc, S. & Downin, M.J. (2012)	Prevention case management improves socioeconomic standing and reduces symptoms of psychological and emotional distress among transgender women	AIDS Care	United States

Colgan, F.; Creegan, C.; McKearney, A. & Wright, T. (2007)	Equality and diversity policies and practices at work: lesbian, gay and bisexual workers	Equal Opportunities International	United Kingdom
Compton, C.A. (2016)	Managing Mixed Messages: Sexual Identity Management in a Changing U.S. Workplace	Management Communication Quarterly	United States
Connell, C. (2012)	Dangerous Disclosures	Sexuality Research & Social Policy: A Journal of the NSRC	United States
Day, N.E. & Schoenrade, P. (2000)	The relationship among reported disclosure of sexual orientation, anti-discrimination policies, top management support and work attitudes of gay and lesbian employees	Personnel Review	USA
Dozier, R. (2015)	What influences the experience of lesbian and gay faculty?	Organizational Cultures: An International Journal	US
Gonzales, G. & Blewett, L.A. (2014)	National and State-Specific Health Insurance Disparities for Adults in Same-Sex Relationships	American Journal of Public Health	United States
Hebl, M.R.; Tonidandel, S.; & Ruggs, E.N. (2012)	The Impact of Like-Mentors for Gay/Lesbian Employees	Human Performance	United States
Hergenrather, K. C.; Geishecker, S.; Clark, G. & Rhodes, S.D. (2013)	A pilot test of the HOPE intervention to explore employment and mental health among African American gay men living with HIV/AIDS: Results from a CBPR study.	AIDS Education and Prevention	United States
Hill, B.J.; Motley, D.N.; Rosentel, K.; VandeVusse, A.; Fuller, C.; Bowers, S.; Williams, M.; Kipke, M.; Kuhns, L.; Pashka, N.; Reisner, S.; DeMonte, J.B.; Goolsby, R.W.; Rupp, B.M.; Slye, N.; Strader, L.C.; Schneider, J. A.;	Employment as HIV prevention: An employment support intervention for adolescent men who have sex with men and adolescent transgender women of color	Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	United States



Razzano, L. & Garofalo, R. (2022)			
Huffman, A.H.; Mills, M.J.; Howes, S.S. & Albritton, M.D. (2021)	Workplace support and affirming behaviors: Moving toward a transgender, gender diverse, and non-binary friendly workplace	International Journal of Transgender Health	United States
Hur, H. (2020)	The role of inclusive work environment practices in promoting LGBT employee job satisfaction and commitment	Public Money & Management	United States
Kelly, M.; Carathers, J.; & Kade, T. (2021)	Beyond Tolerance: Policies, Practices, and Ideologies of Queer-Friendly Workplaces	Sexuality Research and Social Policy	United States
Klawitter, M. (2011)	Multilevel Analysis of the Effects of Antidiscrimination Policies on Earnings by Sexual Orientation	Journal of Policy Analysis and Management	United States
Kollen, T. (2016)	Lessening the difference is more: The relationship between diversity management and the perceived organizational climate for gay men and lesbians	The International Journal of Human Resource Management	Germany
Leppel, K. (2007)	Labour Force Status and Sexual Orientation	Economica	United States
Leppel, K. (2016)	The labor force status of transgender men and women	International Journal of Transgenderism	United States
Lloren, A. & Parini, L. (2017)	How LGBT-Supportive Workplace Policies Shape the Experience of Lesbian, Gay Men, and Bisexual Employees	Sexuality Research and Social Policy	Switzerland
Mann, S. (2021)	Transgender employment and gender marker laws	Labour Economics	United States
Markovic, L; Schonherr, D.; Zandonella, M.; Gil-Salmeron, A.; Smith, L. McDermott, D.; Yang, L.; Dorner, T.E.; Mues, H. & Grabovac, I. (2022)	Associations between workplace characteristics and "outness" in LGBTI workers in Austria	Occup Environ Med	Austria
Martell, M.E. (2013)	Do ENDAs End Discrimination for Behaviorally Gay Men?	J Labor Res	United States
Martell, M.E. (2014)	How ENDAs extend the work week: Legal protection and the	Contemporary Economic Policy	United States

	labor supply of behaviorally gay men		
Nadler, J.T.; Lowery, M.R.; Grebinoski, J. & Jones, R.G. (2014)	Aversive Discrimination in Employment Interviews: Reducing Effects of Sexual Orientation Bias With Accountability	Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity	United States
Nikolaou, D. (2021)	Same-sex marriage laws, LGBT hate crimes, and employment discrimination charges	Southern Economic Journal	United States
Nolan, T.C. (2006)	Outcomes for a Transitional Living Program Serving LGBTQ Youth in New York City	Child Welfare	United States
Pink-Harper, S.; Burnside, R. & Davis, R.S. (2017)	"Justice for all": An examination of self-identified LGBT job satisfaction in the US federal workforce	Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences	United States
Sabharwal, M.; Levine, H.; D'Agostino, M. & Nguyen, T (2019)	Inclusive Work Practices: Turnover Intentions Among LGBT Employees of the U.S. Federal Government	American Review of Public Administration	United States
Sanchez, N.F.; Callahan, E.; Brewster, C.; Poll-Hunter, N.; & Sanchez, J.P (2018)	The Future LGBT Health Professional: Perspectives on Career and Personal Mentorship	LGBT Health	United States
Sansone (2019)	Pink work: Same-sex marriage, employment and discrimination	Journal of Public Economics	United States
Seiler-Ramadas, R.; Markovic, L; Llop-Medina, L.; Baros, S. Bajkusa, M.; Horvat, M.; Smith, L.; McDermott, D. & Grabovac, I. (2021)	Strategies to challenge discrimination and foster inclusivity for LGBT+Q+ youth in workplaces: a qualitative exploratory study in six European countries	European Journal of Public Health	Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom,
Sellers, M.D. (2014)	Discrimination and the Transgender Population: Analysis of the Functionality of Local Government Policies That Protect Gender Identity	Administration & Society	United States
Somerset, J. (2011)	Doing it Together: LGBT mentoring in West Yorkshire	Equal Opportunities Review	United Kingdom
Stevens, S. Haverly, K. & Powell, C. (2020)	Improvements in self-acceptance for LGBTQ+ and straight allied youth and young adults enrolled in	Children and Youth Services Review	United States

	an affirming system of care program		
Tatum, A.K. (2018)	Workplace Climate and Satisfaction in Sexual Minority Populations: An Application of Social Cognitive Career Theory	Journal of Counseling Psychology	United States
Tebe, E. A.; Allan, B.A. & Bell, H.L. (2019)	Work and Well-Being in TGNC Adults: The Moderating Effect of Workplace Protections	Journal of Counseling Psychology	United States
Tejeda, M.J. (2006)	Nondiscrimination Policies and Sexual Identity Disclosure: Do They Make a Difference in Employee Outcomes?	Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal	United States
Turner, C.M.; Arayasirikul, S.; & Wilson, E. C. (2021)	Disparities in HIV-related risk and socio-economic outcomes among trans women in the sex trade and effects of a targeted, anti-sex-trafficking policy	Social Science and Medicine	United States
Wang, J; Gunderson, M. & Wicks, D. (2008)	The Earnings Effect of Sexual Orientation: British Evidence from Worker-Firm Matched Data	British Journal of Industrial Relations	Great Britain
Willis, P. (2009)	From exclusion to inclusion: young queer workers' negotiations of sexually exclusive and inclusive spaces in Australian workplaces	Journal of Youth Studies	Australia
Wright, T. Colgan, F.; Creegan, C. & McKearney, A (2006)	Lesbian, gay and bisexual workers: equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace	Equal Opportunities International	United Kingdom
Wright-Mair, R. & Marine, S.B. (2021)	The Impact of Relationships on the Experiences of Racially Minoritized LGBTQ+ Faculty in Higher Education	Journal of Diversity in Higher Education	United States

## Appendix C: Related Reports

### Reports:

#### Trans Pulse Canada

- Health and well-being among trans and non-binary people doing sex work
  - <https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/report-health-and-well-being-among-trans-and-non-binary-people-doing-sex-work/>
- Social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on transgender and non-binary people in Canada
  - <https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/report-social-and-economic-impacts-of-covid-19-on-transgender-and-non-binary-people-in-canada/>

#### SRDC

- Building the evidence base about economic, health and social inequities faced by LGBTQ2S-Plus individuals in Canada: Phase 1 Report
  - <https://www.srdc.org/media/553123/wage-phase1-report.pdf>
- Building the evidence base about economic, health, and social inequities faced by LGBTQ2S-Plus individuals in Canada: Phase 2 Final Report
  - <https://www.srdc.org/media/553177/wage-phase-2-final-report.pdf>
- LGBTQ2S-Plus voices in employment: Labour market experiences of sexual and gender minorities in Canada
  - <https://www.srdc.org/media/1672993/wage-phase-3-final-report.pdf>
- Barriers to employment and training for equity-seeking groups: Final Report
  - <https://www.srdc.org/media/553157/training-barriers-for-equity-seeking-groups-final-report.pdf>
- Pay gaps, precarity, and prejudice: New evidence on LGBTQ2S-Plus employment in Canada
  - [https://www.srdc.org/media/1673008/final\\_wage-visual-summary.pdf](https://www.srdc.org/media/1673008/final_wage-visual-summary.pdf)
- Summary of evidence about economic, health, and social inequities faced by LGBTQ2S+ individuals in Canada
  - [https://www.srdc.org/media/1673022/wage-integrated-report\\_final.pdf](https://www.srdc.org/media/1673022/wage-integrated-report_final.pdf)

## Appendix D: Interview Guides

### Key Informant Interview Guide

(service providers, employers, and employment/advocacy organizations)

Interviews are intended to be 30-60 minutes, depending on participant availability. Consistent with qualitative methods, this interview guide is intended to guide conversation and will evolve as data collection progresses. The essence of the questions will remain the same. Phrasing of the questions may be altered dependent on sector that participant is from.

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\*Introduction to interviewer, project, and consent process.

Rapport questions:

- 1) Can we start by hearing a bit about your role and your work at [organization] as it relates to 2SLGBTQ+ people and their employment?
  - a. How long have you been in this role?

Primary questions:

#### Skills

- 1) What are some of the particular skills and strengths you think that 2SLGBTQ+ people bring to the employment setting?
  - a. In your view, how are these strengths/skills related to 2SLGBTQ+ identities or experiences?
    - i. Can you think of a client who has exemplified the skills you're talking about? Can you tell me about it?
  - b. How do 2SLGBTQ+ people attain these skills?
  - c. Do you think there are any common gaps in employment skills of 2SLGBTQ+ people?
    - i. Why do you think these gaps exist?
    - ii. Can you think of a particular client that you've worked with where this was an issue? Without identifying details, can you tell me about this experience?
  - d. Beyond sexual and gender diversity, can you speak to skills and strengths as well as gaps experienced by those who experience intersectional oppression? By intersectional, I mean 2SLGBTQ+ people who are Black, Indigenous, people of colour, disabled, or experience marginalization due to other factors?
    - i. Probe for gender, race, disability/health status, citizenship status
    - ii. Are strengths and gaps any different? Examples? Why?
    - iii. Are there other important intersections we should be thinking about in relation to employment skills?
- 2) There are 9 foundational and transferrable skills for success identified by the federal government (e.g., reading, writing, collaboration, numeracy, problem solving, digital

skills). Due to the evolving nature of the labour market, they have recently added “adaptability” and “creativity and innovation” to their employment skills framework. Based on your experience, do you feel there are particular strengths or gaps among 2SLGBTQ+ people in relation to these specific employment skills?

- a. Can you think of a particular client that you’ve worked with where these skills or gaps were demonstrated or missing? Without identifying details, can you tell me about this experience?

### Employment outcomes

- 3) What have you seen in terms of employment outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ people?
  - a. What are some trends/patterns that you’ve seen?
    - i. Why do you think these trends happen/what do you think prompts these trends?
  - b. Can you think of a particular client that you’ve worked with where this pattern was highlighted? Without identifying details, can you tell me about this experience?
  - c. Do you believe discrimination plays a role in the employment outcomes and patterns you observe?
    - i. Do these trends differ between subgroups, including on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, race, disability, etc.?

### Barriers

- 4) What are some barriers you have seen 2SLGBTQ+ people face in accessing and maintaining employment (i.e., labour market integration)?
  - a. How do you think homophobia, biphobia, and/or transphobia shape the education, training, and labour market integration of 2SLGBTQ+ people?
  - b. Can you tell me about an example/a client’s experience that illustrates some of these barriers?
- 5) Are there particular barriers to employment and/or training that you see for subgroups (e.g., bisexual or trans people) within the 2SLGBTQ+ umbrella?
  - a. Beyond sexual and gender diversity, can you speak to barriers experienced by those who experience intersectional oppression? By intersectional, I mean 2SLGBTQ+ people who are Black, Indigenous, people of colour, disabled, or experience marginalization due to other factors?
    - i. Probe for gender, race, disability/health status, citizenship status
  - b. Can you think of a particular client that you’ve worked with who exemplifies what you’ve just spoken about? Without identifying details, can you tell me about it?

### Interventions and resilience

- 6) \*reference back to skill gaps and barriers people are talking about\* Do you know of any services or programs that seem promising to address these gaps/barriers?
  - a. Do you know of workplace and employer practices and policies that impact the employment of 2SLGBTQ+ people (e.g., related to attracting, hiring, and successfully retaining 2SLGBTQ+ workers)?
  - b. Do you have any examples where 2SLGBTQ+ people have overcome barriers, with or without barriers being addressed through policy or practice?

- 7) Has COVID impacted any of what we have talked about so far? If so, how? Can you provide an example?
- 8) Is there anything else you think we should know about, or related to, 2SLGBTQ+ employment skills and training?

### **Key Informant Interview Guide** (2SLGBTQ+ workers)

Interviews are intended to be 45-60 minutes. Consistent with qualitative methods, this interview guide is intended to guide conversation and will evolve as data collection progresses. The essence of the questions will remain the same. Phrasing of the questions may be altered dependent on sector that participant is from. Not every question will be asked to each participant, depending on the direction of the interview.

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\*Introduction to interviewer, project, and consent process.

Rapport questions:

- 1) Can we start by hearing a bit about your education and training, and your current employment situation?
  - a. (If employed) Tell me how your training/education relates (or not) to your current position. How/Why?

Primary questions:

#### Employment outcomes

- 2) Can you tell me about the jobs you've had since high school until now? What were your hopes or plans in high school? (How) have those changed, and why?
  - a. Do you think your job experience has been shaped by your identity/experience as (insert 2SLGBTQ+ identity/experience)?
    - i. If so, how? Can you tell me a story about that?
  - b. Do you see other 2SLGBTQ+ people as having had similar employment experiences?
  - c. Beyond sexual and gender identity/experience, can you speak to how your job experience has been impacted by any other aspect of your identity or experience (for example, related to your gender, race, class, citizenship status, disability status, or other identities or experiences that are important to you)?
    - i. Do the experiences related to \*insert identities discussed\* also connect back to your sexual orientation/gender identity (intersectionality question)? If so, how? Can you tell me about an example of that?



### Skills

- 3) What are some of the skills and strengths you think that you can bring to your jobs?
  - a. In your view, are these strengths/skills related to your sexual and gender identities or experiences? How?
    - i. Could you provide an example of how you have used these skills in your employment?
  - b. How did you get these skills?

\*Probe: Life experience (examples?), informal trainings (examples?), education?
  - c. Do you think that you are missing any skills or training to do the work that you want to do?
    - i. In your view, do any of these missing skills/training have to do with your sexual orientation or gender identity?
  - d. Above you spoke to \*insert intersectional identities discussed\*. Now, can you tell me about skills or experiences that you've had that you think make you particularly employable or have impacted your employment in other ways?
    - i. Do you feel like these skills/gaps/experiences also connect back to your sexual orientation/gender identity (intersectionality question)? If so, how? Can you tell me about an example of that?
    - ii. Are there other aspects of who you are that you think makes a difference to your employment skills?
- 4) Thinking beyond your own personal experience, what are some of the particular skills and strengths you think that 2SLGBTQ+ people more generally bring to workplaces/jobs?
  - a. Do you think that 2SLGBTQ+ people tend to have some of the same challenges with gaining employment-related skills? Like what?
    - iii. Why do you think these gaps exist?

- 5) There are 9 foundational and transferrable skills for success identified by the federal government (display figure on screen for participant to view). Do any of these skills stand out for you as areas where 2SLGBTQ+ people have particular skills, or might be more likely to have gaps in skills compared to straight, cis people?

- Why do \*insert skills identified\* stand out for you?
- If you notice any of these skills as areas where 2SLGBTQ+ people might not be as strong? Why do you think this skill gap exist?
- Could you provide an example or two of the skills you've highlighted as a strength or gap?



- 6) Due to the way employment has been changing over the years, the government has recently added “adaptability” and “creativity and innovation” to their employment skills framework. Based on your experience, do you feel there are particular strengths or gaps you experience in relation to “adaptability” and “creativity and innovation” as skills?
- Can you think of a particular example where one of these skills has been present or missing from your experiences of work or trying to find work?
  - Thinking of broader 2SLGBTQ+ communities, do you feel there are particular strengths or gaps we experience in relation to these specific employment skills?

### Barriers

- 7) What are some challenges you have faced in accessing and maintaining employment?
- How do you think discrimination (e.g., homophobia, biphobia, and/or transphobia) might play a role in the types of jobs people tend to get, whether for yourself or other 2SLGBTQ+ people?  
\*Probe: Could ask specifically for education, training, or experiences of employment.
  - Could you tell me about an example from your own life that illustrates some of what you've spoken about (i.e., these challenges)?

8) Do you think the challenges you experienced were unique to your experiences as a (insert identity: gay, bisexual, trans, etc.) person or that they are shared among others in 2SLGBTQ+ communities?

- a. Are there particular challenges to employment and/or training that you see for other (insert identity: gay, bisexual, trans, etc.) people?
  - i. Above you spoke about your experiences of (insert intersectional experiences). Can you speak to challenges you experienced related to this?

#### Interventions and resilience

9) \*reference back to skill gaps and challenges participant has spoken about\* Do you know of any services or programs that seem promising to address these gaps/challenges?

- a. Have you experienced any policies that have made it harder or easier for you to get or keep jobs (Prompt e.g., related to attracting, hiring, and successfully retaining 2SLGBTQ+ workers)? Can you tell me about a specific time that happened?
- b. Because of challenges with stigma within support systems, many 2SLGBTQ+ have had to resort to informal ways of accessing employment-related experiences or training. Can you tell us about any examples where you have seen this happen in relation to employment or training (either for you personally or for others in 2SLGBTQ+ communities)?
- c. You spoke earlier about various aspects of your identity (insert participants earlier discussion). Can you speak to any workplace practices or policies or examples of resiliency you have experienced to overcome skill gaps and challenges related to this?

10) Has COVID impacted any of what we have talked about so far? If so, how?

- a. Can you provide an example?

11) Is there anything else you think we should know about related to 2SLGBTQ+ employment skills and training, from your experience or what you've observed about our communities?