



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like many population groups with intersecting identities, young 2SLGBTQ* minority-language Francophones in Canada can experience various forms of discrimination in their daily lives. This discrimination may be social, economic, or institutional, and can have serious consequences for individuals' mental and physical health.

Studies have shown that when this discrimination is compounded by the stress of belonging to a linguistic or cultural minority, health and social inequities may be amplified. This can create difficulties accessing appropriate health services, lead to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, and erect barriers to social and economic inclusion.

A participatory action research (PAR) methodology was chosen for this study. This approach was an effective, inclusive means of directly engaging community members in the research process. The 2SLGBTQ* Francophone teens and young adults who participated in the study therefore played a key role, not only by sharing their experiences, but also by actively collaborating in planning the research design. A convergent mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) design was used to analyze the experiences of young 2SLGBTQ* people in Manitoba's Francophone minority community, in their school, family, and community settings, and in the health and social services system. Eight young people between the ages of 14 and 24 participated in progressive interviews. Forty-five young people aged 14 to 24 completed an online survey. Six parents of 2SLGBTQ* youth participated in one-on-one or group interviews, and four school staff members (teachers, education assistant, administration, etc.) took part in a group discussion.

Three quarters of the participants who completed the survey lived in an urban setting. Roughly one quarter of the survey respondents identified as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Colour (BIPOC), and three quarters said they were bilingual (French and English). The vast majority reported having a mental health disorder. More than half reported a lack of French-language mental health supports for 2SLGBTQ* people. A high percentage of respondents reported they had difficulty making friends or forming relationships at school. Difficulty finding safe spaces, whether online or in person, was also reported.

That such a high percentage of respondents reported difficulties making friends or forming relationships at school indicates there is room for improvement in educational settings. To create safe, welcoming spaces for all students who identify as 2SLGBTQ* Francophones, it is essential to educate and raise awareness among school faculty, staff, and fellow students. The study's findings highlight the urgent need for concrete measures to foster inclusion, provide adequate support, and create safe, inclusive spaces for 2SLGBTQ* Francophone individuals. This can be achieved through awareness-raising initiatives, psychosocial support programs, educational resources, and policies aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion within Francophone schools and communities. The following recommendations are therefore intended for schools and the health and social services system, as well as the broader 2SLGBTQ* community and its allies (the "Community").

Although not exhaustive, these recommendations are meant to lay a foundation for discussions and for future initiatives involving this Community. They are based on feedback resulting from frank, open dialogue with young Community members. It is important that these members be consulted at every stage of the process to ensure their needs are taken into account.

Recommendations for schools:

1. Adopt sexual and gender diversity and inclusion policies and procedures in schools and post-secondary institutions, to promote inclusive learning environments and physical spaces (washrooms and changing rooms), inclusive language guidelines, and gender-neutral extracurricular activities. Update any existing policies and procedures.
2. Establish guidelines and train faculty and staff on the use of inclusive language.
3. Develop or adapt resources that promote inclusion to reflect the experiences of Manitoba's young 2SLGBTQ* Francophones (e.g., using inclusive French, incorporating the life experiences of young 2SLGBTQ* people, and countering negative stereotypes) in order to raise awareness and self-determination:
 - a. students;
 - b. families supporting young members of the 2SLGBTQ* community;
 - c. faculty and staff in schools and post-secondary institutions.
4. Develop French-language sexual health resources for 2SLGBTQ* people, including online safety guidelines.

5. Work with teacher education program providers to incorporate tools, training, instruction, and resources that adequately meet the needs of:
 - a. young 2SLGBTQ* Francophones;
 - a. parents and families of young 2SLGBTQ* Francophones;
 - a. school faculty and staff.
6. Offer training to future health and education professionals on how to be an ally to the 2SLGBTQ* community, including guidelines on responding to discrimination and anti-2SLGBTQ* comments, based on a general, queer francophone-informed pedagogy.

Recommendations for health and social services stakeholders:

1. Develop more mental health services for young people. These services must be easily accessible, proactively safe and affirming of diverse sexual and linguistic identities, and revised and updated on an ongoing basis.
2. Work with people who identify as 2SLGBTQ* to develop French-language sexual health resources for 2SLGBTQ* people, including online safety guidelines.
3. Work with people who identify as 2SLGBTQ* to develop or adapt existing resources for the Franco-Manitoban context, in order to increase service providers' awareness of inclusive health care practices, including the use of safe language and respect for pronouns.
4. Promote existing training programs to establish guidelines and train staff on the use of inclusive language.

Recommendations for the Community:

1. Build bridges between the Collectif LGBTQ* du Manitoba and schools, particularly in rural areas, to share available tools and resources, and to establish partnerships with GSAs (gay-straight alliances) and school staff/faculty.
2. Provide inclusive online and in-person community meeting places for young people that respect their diverse needs and intersectional identities.

Despite some of its limitations, this study clearly spells out the need to recognize the challenges outlined above and to put measures in place that support 2SLGBTQ Francophone populations. This will mean leveraging educational and awareness programs to reduce discrimination, providing access to adapted support services, and creating safe, inclusive environments, so all young 2SLGBTQ* people can live authentically.*

