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## SUMMARY

This article summarizes the main findings of a large national survey conducted in Canada by the CROP polling firm and commissioned by the Jasmin Roy Sophie Desmarais Foundation in 2024. The author acted as a scientific advisor, mainly for the formulation of the questions (about fifty) and the analysis of the responses. This analysis of the results shows that people from sexual and gender diversity, particularly young people and trans or non-binary people, experience much more than others various types of mental health problems, violence, bullying and discrimination. These data highlight the clear needs for help and support of young people from sexual and gender diversity, especially young trans and non-binary people.

A total of 8,396 respondents answered a questionnaire distributed on the web, mainly via 2SLGBTQI+ groups and associations across Canada. Of this number, 7,481 people identified as part of sexual and gender diversity. A sample of 1,024 people representative of the general population was created for comparison purposes. It should be noted that among all respondents, 1,309 identified as trans and 1,625 as non-binary. It should also be noted that while 8.6% of respondents aged 18 and over of the representative sample identify as sexual and gender diverse, this proportion is almost twice as high among 18-34 years-old, at 16.5%.

# Sexual and Gender Diversity in Canada: A Revealing National Survey

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2023, the Jasmin Roy Sophie Desmarais Foundation<sup>1</sup> commissioned the research firm CROP to conduct a large-scale study on the situation of sexual and gender diverse individuals in Canada. This research followed a similar, but more modest, Canada-wide survey carried out in 2017 (n = 2,697 in 2017; n = 8,396 in 2024), titled *LGBT+ Realities in Canada* (JRSDF, 2017). The aim was to capture a current snapshot of the situation and assess how things have evolved, in order to better determine priorities and action plans in the ongoing fight against homophobia and transphobia. The broader ambition of this survey was to better understand the realities and challenges faced today by people from sexual and gender diverse communities in Canada, while also, through a representative sample of the general population, gauging Canadian society's views on these issues.

The data collection (which involved approximately fifty questions) took place from February 5 to June 11, 2024. It gathered responses from 1,024 individuals representative of the Canadian population aged 18 and over, as well as responses from 7,481 individuals aged 15 and over who self-identified as members of the sexual and gender diversity community. It's important to note that this latter sample is not necessarily representative, as all participants voluntarily responded to an online survey. This study was conducted by the CROP research firm, in collaboration with the JRSDF. The full set of survey questions and detailed responses (194 pages), of which this article is a brief summary<sup>2</sup>, is available freely via the following link:

<https://fondationjasminroy.com/en/survey-crop/>

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<sup>1</sup> In the remainder of this article, the Jasmin Roy Sophie Desmarais Foundation will be referred to as: the JRSDF.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the survey data collected on marital status and family composition were to be analyzed at a later stage, which still needed to be done at the time these lines were written.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study of the general population was conducted with a statistically representative web panel of the Canadian population, composed of 1,024 individuals aged 18 and over. The results from this portion were weighted using the quota method<sup>3</sup> to reflect a representative distribution of the population — particularly by age, gender, education level, region, and respondents' mother tongue. Quotas based on Statistics Canada data were established in advance to ensure that this sample accurately represented Canada's diversity across all regions of the country. This sample was surveyed online from February to June 2024.

As for the sample of 7,481 individuals identifying as part of the sexual and gender diversity community, it was based primarily on voluntary participation. The JRSDF and CROP reached out by email to numerous Canadian organizations with missions or roles connected to the targeted populations. Approximately 900 organizations across the country were contacted by email and invited to share the survey link (available in both of Canada's official languages, according to the respondent's choice). The survey link was also published on the JRSDF's social media platforms. Data collection from individuals aged 15 and over, residing in Canada and self-identifying as part of the sexual and gender diversity community, took place from February 5 to June 11, 2024.

It is important to note that respondent anonymity and the confidentiality of responses were strictly guaranteed at all times, as stated at the beginning of the questionnaire. Sensitive questions (particularly those relating to experiences of violence) were preceded by a content warning, allowing respondents to skip ahead to the next section (a feature that was technically available at any point in the survey). A list of support resources for victims of violence was also provided.

To offer a snapshot of the diversity among 2SLGBTQ+ respondents, we begin with a brief demographic overview, starting with gender identity:

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<sup>3</sup> The quota sampling method involves establishing variables whose representation in the general population is known in advance, in order to create a sort of reduced, yet representative, model of studied population.

**Cisgender men:** 1,188

**Cisgender women:** 2,685

**Trans men:** 684

**Trans women:** 552

**Trans people (unspecified):** 73

**Non-binary people:** 1,625

**Questioning individuals:** 319

**Other identities (e.g., queer, Two-Spirit, agender, gender-fluid, intersex, etc.):** 355

Now let's take a look at sexual orientation (note that a few individuals chose not to answer this question, which explains the slightly lower number of responses):

**Individuals identifying as...**

**Homosexual, lesbian, or gay:** 2,693

**Bisexual:** 1,941

**Asexual:** 608

**Pansexual:** 1,253

**Questioning:** 288

**Queer:** 457

**Other (e.g., demisexual, omnisexual):** 110

### 3. CONTEXT AND REVIEW OF SIMILAR STUDIES CONDUCTED IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

Quantitative in nature, this study is exploratory (i.e., it was not designed to test hypotheses). The research questions were developed to gain a better understanding of various aspects of the lived experiences of sexual and gender diverse individuals in Canada. Two main criteria guided their development: to shed light on underexplored realities (for example, the potential fluidity of gender or sexual orientation) and poorly documented phenomena (such as the percentage of individuals who have undergone conversion therapy), as well as evolving trends (such as the level of social acceptance of 2SLGBTQ+ couples' visibility). Special attention was given to better understanding the experiences of trans and non-binary people, including their access to medical care, when applicable.

The analysis and interpretation of results were limited to a primary-level reading — that is, what the data themselves reveal — while comparing them, when possible, with findings from similar recent studies. That said, when specific concepts (such as minority stress) are used to interpret certain results, they will be briefly explained and referenced. It is also worth noting that special care was taken to ensure that the questionnaire used simple, inclusive, and gender-neutral language in both of Canada's official languages.

Although LGBTQ+ research was long overlooked, the importance and legitimacy of investigating these realities are now widely recognized. This was notably addressed in a 2020 special issue of the journal *Service social*. The purpose of this article is not to provide an exhaustive review of all existing literature on issues related to sexual and gender diversity (which would be a massive undertaking in itself<sup>4</sup>), but rather to present new empirical research based on what is likely one of the largest samples of its kind in Canada to date. In short, this research aims to generate new knowledge rather than summarize what is already known about topics such as social acceptance, access to healthcare, community organizations, and experiences of violence. Nevertheless, drawing comparisons with major studies conducted in Quebec and Canada in recent years was essential — if only to highlight converging results (which, as we'll see, are numerous). For this reason, our literature review will focus primarily on large-scale Canadian and Quebec-based quantitative studies, which offer valuable insights.

One of the first major studies of this kind was the *Savoirs sur l'inclusion et l'exclusion des personnes LGBTQ+ (Enquête SAVIE-LGBTQ+, 2019-2020)* (SAVIE-LGBTQ+ Survey (2019–

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<sup>4</sup> Some websites are dedicated to addressing this challenge, including U.S.-based, English-language sources such as Statista and the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, both of which are cited in the bibliography of this article.

2020), Knowledge on the Inclusion and Exclusion of LGBTQ+ People). It aimed to document experiences of devaluation, denial, and marginalization that deprive LGBTQ+ individuals of their rights in various areas of life. The project collected responses from 4,980 participants aged 18 and over, all identifying as sexual and/or gender diverse and living in Quebec. Data were collected from September 2019 to August 2020 and covered a wide range of topics including employment, family life, education, interpersonal relationships, health and healthcare access, and community involvement. This study highlighted many of the same trends found in our results — for example, the significantly higher rates of bullying and cyberbullying experienced by trans and non-binary individuals (Coutu, Blais, Samoilenko & Côté, 2024).

Another relevant study is the *Portrait des violences sexuelles subies par les personnes étudiantes 2SLGBTQIA+ en milieu collégial et expériences de signalement à l'établissement – Rapport de recherche du projet Alliance 2SLGBTQIA+* (Portrait of Sexual Violence Experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ College Students and Reporting Experiences to Institutions – Research Report from the Alliance 2SLGBTQIA+ Project) (Bergeron, Goyer, Després, Carignan-Allard, St Hilaire, Blais, et al., 2023). This project, titled *Alliance 2SLGBTQIA+ : pour une culture de respect, d'égalité et de consentement en milieu collégial* (Alliance 2SLGBTQIA+: For a Culture of Respect, Equality, and Consent in Colleges), aimed to better understand the sexual violence experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ students in post-secondary settings. It was led by the Chaire de recherche sur les violences sexistes et sexuelles en milieu d'enseignement supérieur de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (Research Chair on Sexist and Sexual Violence in Higher Education at the Université du Québec à Montréal), in partnership with the Chaire de recherche sur la diversité sexuelle et la pluralité des genres (Research Chair on Sexual and Gender Diversity), the Fédération des cégeps, the Conseil québécois LGBT, and the organization Diversité 02. The quantitative component — by far the largest — gathered responses from 3,203 individuals through an online questionnaire between October 2021 and May 2022. As we will see, the results align with our own regarding the overrepresentation of trans and non-binary youth among victims of harassment and violence.

For employment-related comparisons, we referred to a recent publication by the Équipe de recherche BRAV (Bien-être et Résilience devant l'Adversité) (BRAV Research Team (Well-being and Resilience in the Face of Adversity)) at UQÀM, notable for its large sample of over 1,000 sexual and gender diverse individuals aged 15 to 29 (Dion, Baiocco, Blais, Boislard, Philibert, et al., 2024).

The Trans and Non-Binary Youth Health and Well-Being study, conducted in 2019 and published in 2021, also produced results that intersect with ours. Over a 10-week period in 2019, the Trans Pulse Canada research team (Navarro, Johnstone, Temple Newhook, Smith, Wallace Skelton, Prempeh, Lopez, Scheim, & Bauer, 2021) collected data from 2,873 trans and non-binary individuals aged 14 and over living in Canada. The study focused on access to and quality of



healthcare, as well as experiences of violence in family settings. Notably, about 35% (991 respondents) were youth. This group reported lower access to gender-affirming care, poorer mental health, and fewer positive experiences with primary care compared to the rest of the sample. The rates of reported violence and harassment were also alarmingly high — another finding that aligns with our results.

Finally, a research report by the Williams Institute (Flores & Conron, 2023) titled *Adult LGBT Population in the United States* aimed primarily to estimate the number of sexual and gender diverse people in the U.S. — a country with a social landscape similar to Canada's. As we will see, the percentages of young people identifying as sexual or gender diverse in this study closely mirror those found in our own research. A large Gallup poll conducted in the U.S. in 2024 further confirms this trend: one in five young Americans now identifies as LGBTQ (Gallup, 2024). We have also used available data from Statistics Canada, which is increasingly attentive to sexual and gender diversity issues (with specific data sources cited where relevant).

## 4. SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

To begin this section, let's clarify the scope of the population in question. According to our survey, 8.6% of respondents aged 18 and over from the representative general population sample identify as part of the sexual and gender diversity community. This proportion is nearly twice as high among 18–34-year-olds, reaching 16.5%. That percentage is even slightly lower than in other recent studies of the same kind. For example, the Canadian portion of the 2024 international IPSOS LGBTQ+ survey, which also included a sample of 1,000 people, found that 22% of Canadians under 35 identified as LGBTQ+ — again, double the rate in the general population (IPSOS, 2024). Similarly, the most recent Gallup survey in the United States found that 22% of Generation Z, born after 2017, identify as LGBTQ (Gallup, 2024).

### 4.1 Openness to Diversity in the Canadian Population

While 66% of Canadians say they are comfortable interacting with gender diverse individuals, this comfort level drops significantly when it comes to forming friendships. Among sexual and gender diverse individuals, 91% report having gay, bisexual, or pansexual friends, but only 46% of the general population say the same. Additionally, while 60% of people in the diversity sample have trans or non-binary friends, only 13% of the general population does. This lack of contact contributes to a broader lack of understanding, as further survey responses indicate. Cisgender men in particular report being significantly less comfortable with trans and non-binary people than other subgroups — a result mirrored in a Quebec study on attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals released in June 2024 (Secrétariat à la condition féminine, 2024).

### 4.2 Social Acceptability of Public Displays of Affection

The general Canadian population is more reserved than sexual and gender diverse respondents regarding public displays of affection, especially those involving same-sex or gender diverse couples. While nearly 9 out of 10 people in the diversity sample feel comfortable seeing same-sex or gender diverse couples hold hands in public (91% for two women, 89% for two men, 87% for a trans or non-binary person with another individual), comfort drops sharply in the general population (57%, 50%, and 49%, respectively).

When it comes to kissing in public, only 36% of the general population is comfortable seeing two women kissing on the lips, 31% for two men, and 32% for a trans or non-binary person kissing someone. Youth aged 15–24 and adults 55+ are the least comfortable with such displays, particularly when involving trans or non-conforming individuals. Fewer than 25% of the general

public feels very comfortable with children witnessing such displays involving same-sex, trans, or non-binary individuals.

#### 4.3 Acceptance and Social Integration of Diversity

Regarding the acceptance and integration of diversity within Canadian society, 51% of respondents from the representative general population sample believe that the situation has improved in recent years. However, the perception is quite different among sexual and gender diverse individuals: 39% feel that things have *worsened* over the past three years, compared to only 14% of the general population.

Furthermore, only 41% of the general population say they feel comfortable seeing a woman dress and behave in a masculine way in public; just 37% say the same for a man dressing and behaving in a feminine way. In this area, the general population is on average *half as comfortable* with expressions of gender diversity as those within the community itself.

#### 4.4 Gradation and Fluidity of Gender Identity

To measure the potential gradation and fluidity of gender identity, survey participants were asked to position themselves on an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 indicated feeling entirely masculine and 10 entirely feminine. Among cisgender men in the general Canadian population, the average score was 1.8 out of 10. For cisgender women in the general population, the average was 8.4 out of 10. These averages were significantly less polarized among individuals from the sexual and gender diversity community: 2.9 out of 10 for cisgender men and 6.8 out of 10 for cisgender women.

#### 4.5 Gradation and Fluidity of Sexual Orientation

Fantasies, along with behaviors and sense of identity, are reliable indicators of a person's sexual orientation. A clear majority (85%) of cisgender heterosexual men in our sample reported fantasizing exclusively about women. That said, 10% of cisgender heterosexual men reported having same-sex fantasies, and 5% also reported fantasizing about trans or non-binary individuals (compared to just 1% among cisgender women). Among cisgender heterosexual women, 65% reported fantasizing exclusively about men. Same-sex attraction appears to be more prevalent in this group, with 25% reporting lesbian fantasies.

In terms of sexual behavior, 9% of women who identify as heterosexual reported having had sexual experiences with someone of the same sex; for men identifying as heterosexual, the figure was

7%. Additionally, 1% of heterosexual individuals reported having had sexual relations with a trans or non-binary person. Among cisgender men and women within the diversity sample, the percentage who had had sex with a trans or non-binary person rose to 17%. About half of all trans and non-binary respondents reported having had sexual relations with other trans or non-binary individuals.

#### 4.6 Questioning, Acceptance, and Affirmation of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Sexual and gender diverse individuals report far more fluctuation in their sexual orientation over time (57%) compared to the general population (16%). This fluctuation is especially common among people who identify as bisexual, pansexual, queer, or questioning. It is particularly pronounced among the youngest age group: 71% of respondents aged 15–17 reported changes in their sexual orientation over time.

Gay men reported the least fluctuation in orientation, with only 28% indicating any change. Generally, questioning about sexual orientation begins during childhood (ages 6–12 for 29% of sexual and gender diverse individuals) or adolescence (ages 13–19 for 43%). Less commonly, this self-reflection occurs in early adulthood (12% between ages 20–34). Acceptance and affirmation of sexual orientation and gender identity logically follow this process and most often take place during adolescence or early adulthood. For fewer than 10% of respondents, this process occurred after age 35.

Gender identity questioning tends to begin even earlier than sexual orientation questioning. Among respondents, 41% said they began questioning their gender identity before the age of 13, and 16% said it began before the age of 6. Acceptance and affirmation usually followed a few years later, typically in adolescence or early adulthood. Support from loved ones was described as especially valuable during this period — a finding also highlighted in the SAVIE-LGBTQ Survey (2019–2020). Notably, more than half of trans men began questioning their gender identity before age 13. Trans men also reported the earliest affirmation and acceptance of their gender identity, typically during adolescence.

At the time of the survey, the vast majority of sexual and gender diverse respondents reported feeling comfortable with their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, older individuals reported being more comfortable openly discussing their sexual orientation. Respondents aged 15–34 were significantly less likely to say they felt at ease speaking openly about it.

#### 4.7 So-Called Conversion Therapies

On average, 4% of individuals in the sexual and gender diversity sample reported having been subjected to so-called conversion therapies. However, this figure rises to 7% among trans men and non-binary individuals, 9% among trans women and bisexual trans people, and even 10% among non-binary individuals who identify as homosexual. These groups are, or have been, the most vulnerable in this regard. According to data from the SAVIE-LGBTQ project, 5% of LGBTQ youth in Canada reported having experienced conversion therapy (SAVIE-LGBTQ, 2022), a proportion quite similar to what our survey found.

#### 4.8 Community Resources

One in four individuals from the diversity sample reported having used community organizations or peer support groups related to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Among trans individuals, that figure doubles: 50% for trans men and 55% for trans women.

Overall, 76% of people who sought help from community organizations reported that the support they received was “very” or “fairly” satisfactory. Among the most helpful resources cited were social media (52%) and the internet more generally (42%), especially during the process of exploring, accepting, or affirming one’s identity. However, people in the sexual and gender diversity sample were nearly twice as likely (58%) as those in the general population (30%) to say that LGBTQ+ community resources are insufficient. More than three-quarters of trans and non-binary respondents felt that available resources were lacking. Respondents aged 35 and older from the sexual and gender diversity sample were also more critical in this regard, with 62% stating that community resources were insufficient.

#### 4.9 Medical Treatments Among Trans and Non-Binary Individuals

Among trans individuals, 76% reported having used hormone treatments and 37% reported having undergone surgery. For non-binary individuals, the figures were 20% for hormone treatments and 13% for surgery. Notably, 53% of those who accessed these treatments said that gaining access was difficult. This finding aligns with the SAVIE-LGBTQ (2019–2020) survey, where nearly half of trans and non-binary respondents — especially younger individuals — reported unmet healthcare needs.

Half of trans men (48%) said they had undergone surgery to help align with their gender identity. Among trans women, 29% reported having had surgery, although a larger proportion (81%) reported taking hormones, compared to 72% of trans men. Among those aged 25–34 — the age group with the highest treatment rates — 90% of trans individuals reported having taken hormones,

and 45% had undergone surgery. About one in four trans youth aged 15–17 (28%) had started hormone treatment. However, surgeries in this age group were very rare: only 4% reported having had surgery.

#### 4.10 Experiences of Violence

Sexual and gender diverse individuals experience higher rates of violence and discrimination. They are significantly more targeted than the general population: while 27% of the general population reported never having been a victim of violence or discrimination, only 8% of individuals from sexual and gender diversity said the same. In the 12 months preceding the survey, 23% of the general population reported having experienced violence, compared to 46% of sexual and gender diverse individuals — twice as many. This trend aligns with data from Statistics Canada: excluding violence perpetrated by intimate partners, 59% of LGB+ individuals in Canada have been physically or sexual assaulted at least once since the age of 15 — compared to 37% of heterosexual individuals who reported the same (Statistics Canada, 2022d). Even more concerning, according to the same source, 6% of LGB+ individuals aged 15 and older reported being physically assaulted at least once in the 12 months prior to the 2018 Survey on Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) (Statistics Canada, 2022d).

According to our survey, over their lifetime:

- 54% of individuals from the sexual and gender diversity have experienced discrimination or verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual violence related to their appearance;
- 39% related to their gender identity, gender, or sex;
- 51% related to their sexual orientation;
- 19% related to a disability.

These percentages are consistent with the findings from the Alliance 2SLGBTQIA+ study, in which just over half of the participants reported having experienced at least one instance of sexual harassment, unwanted sexual behavior, or sexual coercion by someone affiliated with their educational institution (Bergeron, Goyer, Després, Carignan-Allard, St Hilaire, Blais, et al., 2023). Statistics Canada also found that three-quarters of sexual and gender diverse youth experienced harassment in the year prior to being surveyed (Statistics Canada, 2022b).

Our research shows that trans and non-binary individuals, as well as youth aged 15–17, report the highest rates of violence—at least twice the average. These results mirror those of the 2019 Trans Pulse study, which found that in the previous five years, 72% of trans or non-binary youth experienced verbal harassment, and 1 in 5 avoided school out of fear of being harassed or having

their gender identity revealed (Navarro, Johnstone, Temple Newhook, Smith, Wallace Skelton, Prempeh, Lopez, Scheim, & Bauer, 2021).

Half of the respondents (52%) said social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) were helpful in navigating, accepting, or affirming their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Despite these benefits, the internet is also widely seen as a space where sexual and gender diverse people face bullying and violence. They report being three times more likely to experience cyberviolence than the general population (32% vs. 10%). Focusing on the 12 months prior to the survey:

- 17% of trans men,
- 31% of trans women, and
- 20% of non-binary individuals

reported having experienced cyberviolence. Of all age groups, 15–17-year-olds from the diversity sample were the most at risk of experiencing cyberviolence (1 in 4) and other forms of violence or discrimination addressed in the survey.

The workplace and educational institutions are the two most common settings where violence and discrimination occur. In 18% of cases, the perpetrator was a coworker or fellow student. This finding is consistent with those of a March 2024 study on workplace harassment (Dion, Baiocco, Blais, Boislard, Philibert & BRAV Research Team, 2024). Strikingly, nearly 1 in 2 youth aged 15–17 (46%) who experienced violence in the past year said the incident took place in or near a school.

Improving sex education programs was identified — by both sexual and gender diversity and the general population — as the most effective measure for improving well-being and social integration of sexual and gender diverse people. This makes sense, as the vast majority of youth begin questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity during their school years (ages 6–19).

During their most recent episode of violence or discrimination:

- 18% of diversity respondents were in a private residence,
- 12% were at work,
- 16% were online,
- 14% were in public spaces, and
- 12% were in or near a school.



In 48% of cases, the victim knew their aggressor.

73% of perpetrators were men.

33% were women.

5% were trans or non-binary people.

As for the age of aggressors:

17% were under 18;

28% were aged 18–29;

44% were aged 30–50;

21% were over 50.

Notably, among 15–17-year-old victims, 66% of aggressors were also minors, suggesting they were likely peers. Finally, bisexual women were found to be the most likely to experience violence from their partner(s).

#### 4.11 Health Issues

A significant number of sexual and gender diverse individuals rate their mental health poorly. In fact, 60% of individuals in the diversity sample described their mental health as “fair” or “poor,” compared to 32% of the general population. One in four (25%) said their mental health was “poor,” versus just 8% in the general population. Those most likely to report poor mental health were individuals who are questioning (77%), non-binary (74%), or trans (66%). Once again, youth aged 15 to 17 reported the highest rates.

According to Statistics Canada, sexual and gender diverse individuals are three times more likely to report mental health challenges than the non-2SLGBTQI+ population (Statistics Canada, 2024). More than 6 in 10 (65%) trans and non-binary individuals in Canada described their mental health as fair or poor, compared to just 1 in 10 (11%) cisgender individuals. Trans and non-binary individuals were also more likely to report being diagnosed with a mood or anxiety disorder (61% vs. 17%) or having seriously considered suicide at some point in their lives (45% vs. 16%) (Statistics Canada, 2022d).

In our own survey, individuals from the diversity sample were nearly twice as likely to have received a diagnosis of depression (49% vs. 26%) or an anxiety disorder (48% vs. 26%) compared to the general population. These figures peaked among non-binary individuals (66% for both



depression and anxiety) and trans men (66% for depression, 64% for anxiety). These findings closely align with those from the SAVIE-LGBTQ survey (2019–2020), which found that over one-third of LGBTQ respondents and more than half of trans and non-binary respondents had been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

In the 12 months preceding our survey, 40% of individuals in the sexual and gender diversity sample reported having had suicidal thoughts — more than three times the rate in the general population (12%). These numbers were even higher among trans and non-binary individuals, ranging from 55% to 65%. This corresponds with findings from Trans Pulse research, which revealed that 2 in 5 young trans and non-binary individuals had contemplated suicide in the past year, and 1 in 10 had attempted it (Navarro et al., 2021). In our survey, nearly 75% of trans youth under 24 had experienced suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months. The rate was nearly as high for non-binary youth: 70% among those aged 15–17 and 65% among those aged 18–24.

Alarming, one in five trans or non-binary individuals aged 15–17 reported having attempted suicide in the past year. Among those aged 18–24 in the same groups, the rate was one in ten. Overall, while 2% of the general population reported ever attempting suicide, the figure among sexual and gender diverse individuals was 5%. Rates were even higher in certain subgroups: 20% of trans youth aged 15–17 and 23% of non-binary youth in the same age group reported having attempted suicide.

Rates of substance use disorders (21%), eating disorders (20%), and cognitive disorders (18%) were also two to four times higher among individuals in the sexual and gender diversity sample compared to the general population. Lastly, it's important to note that individuals from the sexual and gender diversity sample were 2.5 times less likely to feel comfortable asking all the questions they wanted during medical appointments (17% vs. 7% for the general population).

## 5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey reveals that the perceptions held by sexual and gender diverse individuals about their realities differ significantly from those of the general population — across many areas. The general population appears less open to public expressions of sexual and gender diverse individuals (e.g., same-sex couples kissing in public), while simultaneously expressing greater satisfaction with available resources for sexual and gender minorities and the evolution of societal attitudes. The general population also seems to have limited contact with realities such as trans and non-binary identities, which may lead to a lack of understanding or even prejudice.

This survey successfully reached a very large number of trans and non-binary individuals (2,934 respondents in total). In this regard, it now stands alongside the 2019 Trans Pulse survey (reported in 2020), which had a sample of 2,873 respondents, as one of the largest surveys to date on this population in Canada. Their findings align closely (Trans Pulse, 2021): there is an urgent need to provide better support for these populations. Our study clearly shows that trans and non-binary individuals — particularly the youngest — face greater challenges than all other groups across almost every area examined. Their situation unquestionably deserves much more attention from public services (particularly in physical and mental healthcare and educational settings) as well as access to appropriate resources. This is especially pressing given the growing number of young people identifying as trans or non-binary.

According to Statistics Canada, more than 100,000 people aged 15 and older identified as trans or non-binary in 2021 — nearly 1% of the population aged 20–25 (Statistics Canada, 2022a). This figure is likely an underestimation, as census responses are often completed by a parent on behalf of the household (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Canada was the first country to ask such questions in a national census, so comparisons with other nations remain difficult. However, large U.S. databases estimate that 1.4% of American adolescents aged 13–17 identify as trans or non-binary (Williams Institute, 2020). Similar trends are seen worldwide: according to a 2023 IPSOS survey conducted in 30 countries with 22,500 respondents, at least 2% of Gen Z individuals (born after 1997) identified as trans or non-binary. In IPSOS's 2024 survey, which added options such as gender-fluid or non-conforming identities, 3% of Gen Z respondents identified as non-cisgender (IPSOS, 2024). GALLUP reports a similar figure: 2.1% of Gen Z individuals identify as trans (GALLUP, 2024). These numbers are not negligible.

It is therefore essential for public services — particularly schools, workplaces, and the healthcare system — to adapt their practices to these realities. Based on our survey results, we have identified a series of actions that appear important, even urgent:

### 5.1 Combat Violence and Discrimination

Sexual and gender diverse individuals, especially youth, are significantly more likely to experience violence and discrimination than others, as confirmed by our findings and by other studies of this kind. Over the past 12 months, 46% of diversity respondents experienced violence, compared to 23% of the general population. Over a lifetime, 89% of diversity respondents reported experiencing some form of violence or discrimination, versus 69% of the general population. These numbers show that, despite some progress in social acceptance since the 2017 JRSDF-CROP survey (JRSDF, 2017), people from the sexual and gender community continue to be frequent targets of violence.

### 5.2 Address Violence and Discrimination in Workplaces and Schools

Workplaces and educational institutions are critical spaces where violence and discrimination often occur. These locations were involved in 24% of recent discrimination or violence cases. In 18% of cases, perpetrators were colleagues or classmates. Alarming, nearly half (46%) of 15–17-year-olds who experienced violence or discrimination said it occurred in or near a school. This is highly concerning. Specific programs and pro-diversity educational measures focusing on civic, social, and emotional learning for all youth should be strongly encouraged — and ideally, made mandatory in school curricula.

### 5.3 Prevent and Counter Online Violence

While the internet serves as a valuable resource for sexual and gender diverse people — offering access to peer support and critical information — it is also a major space where harassment and violence occur. According to our survey, one in two respondents considered social media and the web to be beneficial in exploring, accepting, or affirming their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Despite these benefits, online spaces are three times more likely to expose diversity respondents to cyberviolence (32%) compared to the general population (10%). In the past year, the most affected groups were trans individuals (26%) and youth aged 15–17 (25%). It is therefore

crucial to implement specific awareness and prevention programs in collaboration with digital platforms, which must also be held more accountable.

#### 5.4 Improve Access to Mental Health Support

Many individuals in the diversity sample reported their mental health as “fair” or “poor” (60% vs. 32% in the general population). Their reported stress level was also higher (6.5/10 vs. 5.3/10), which supports the theory of minority stress (Frost & Meyer, 2021).

Diversity respondents were twice as likely to have been diagnosed with depression (49% vs. 26%) or an anxiety disorder (48% vs. 26%) than the general population. The same is true for substance use disorders (21% vs. 12%) and eating disorders (20% vs. 8%). These differences are significant.

Four in ten diversity respondents (40%) reported having had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months — three times higher than the general population (12%). These figures are especially alarming among trans and non-binary youth, the most vulnerable group in our sample. This population’s needs remain largely unmet in terms of prevention and mental health intervention. Accessible, tailored mental health services — particularly for youth — are urgently needed. More than half (58%) of respondents from the sexual and gender diversity sample reported that current support services are insufficient.

#### 5.5 Enhance Sexual Education in Schools

Improving sexual education is identified — by both the sexual and gender diversity sample and the general population — as the most effective way to promote well-being and inclusion for sexual and gender diverse individuals. Since most youth begin questioning their orientation or identity between ages 6 and 19, sexual education curricula must include comprehensive, respectful, and inclusive coverage of LGBTQ+ experiences.

#### 5.6 Fund Large-Scale Research on Sexual and Gender Diversity

Finally, more research is needed on the lives and needs of sexual and gender diverse populations — especially younger generations. Despite some progress in recent years, few large-sample studies exist on the living conditions of these populations, particularly in Quebec. This gap must be addressed. (Note: the present study was 100% funded by a private foundation due to a lack of public funding.) Greater knowledge of 2SLGBTQI+ issues would allow for more strategic allocation of resources and more effective prioritization of actions — something clearly demonstrated by the results of this survey.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Conducting this survey — and especially analyzing its results — provided an invaluable opportunity to gain deeper insight into the lived experiences of sexual and gender diverse individuals in Canada today. Clearly, surveys of this kind should be conducted regularly, as they allow us to take the pulse of communities that remain largely misunderstood, particularly minorities within minorities — such as youth, trans, and non-binary individuals. Having the opportunity to hear from such a large number of respondents who generously shared their realities and perspectives with us was a privilege — one we were committed to sharing through this report. That said, we recognize that there is still much to learn, and even more to help others understand, when it comes to sexual and gender diversity. May the findings of this research serve as a meaningful step forward in that direction.

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