



AROUND THE RAINBOW:

CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR LGBTTQ+ FAMILIES
IN OTTAWA

Nine Years of Learning and Advice



FSO | SFO
Family Services Ottawa | Services à la famille Ottawa



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FOREWORD

Around the Rainbow has been very fortunate to receive funding and support from The Counselling Foundation of Canada (the Foundation) for the production of this manual. Over the past 7 years, with the Foundation's support Family Services Ottawa has been able to move a three-year pilot project into an integrated, multi-service program. Developing a program for LGBTTTQ+ families within a main stream, almost 100 year-old organization is fraught with opportunity and challenge. The purpose of this manual is to share the experiences and insights of Family Services Ottawa and the Around the Rainbow program with others working with or developing and expanding services for LGBTTTQ+ families.

It is a time of change and growth in the area of services for LGBTTTQ+ families. In the past 10 – 15 years, the number of LGBTTTQ+ families with children has grown significantly and the service needs have been evolving. In recent years, there has been a growing interest and need for information and services to support families with gender independent, gender creative, trans children. Unfortunately, many communities have not yet had the opportunity to develop resources and programs for LGBTTTQ+ families.

Our journey has been productive, valuable, difficult, painful, fulfilling and surprising. Over the past 10 years, we have made mistakes, developed new partnerships, created unique programs, trained thousands of individuals in hundreds of organizations, provided LGBTTTQ+ positive counselling to hundreds of individuals, challenged our agency and our staff to adapt and change, created system change within our community and learned that the learning is never finished.

We hope that others will find useful resources, advice and hints of how to proceed in this document. Please share this manual and its resources widely with your staff, clients, participants and community partners.

Kathryn Ann Hill.
Executive Director, Family Services Ottawa.



The Counselling Foundation of Canada

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THE AROUND THE RAINBOW JOURNEY AT FAMILY SERVICES OTTAWA (FSO)

Family Services Ottawa (FSO) is a 100 year-old organization that has travelled a long road from its beginnings in 1914. In 1914, the population of Ottawa was approximately 90,000, in 2014, it is 870,250, the average life expectancy for women was 53 years and for men it was 50 years. Today those numbers have risen to 83 years for women and 79 years for men. When FSO opened its doors, there were no antibiotics, World War I had just begun, families were washing their laundry by hand, the Ottawa Public Library was 8 years old and Ottawa's train station had been open for just two years. Over the past 100 years, FSO has experienced similar dramatic changes.

In 1914, three women in Ottawa were distressed to learn that some residents of their city were lining up in breadlines; in response to their concerns, they founded The Ottawa Welfare Bureau (which eventually became Family Services Ottawa). The mandate of the Ottawa Welfare Bureau was to coordinate relief efforts in a fair and equitable way across charities in Ottawa. Eventually the Bureau became the primary source of welfare aid in the city. Around the Rainbow is an important part of the evolution of an agency that prides itself on recognizing and responding to the changing needs of the community by developing new programs and services and advocating for needed social change. Through the years Family Services Ottawa has been a pioneer and advocate in many program and service areas.

In the 1920's when the expectation was for men to be the family breadwinner, FSO was responding to requests such as: "There are eleven of us and my man is out of work. I asked a policeman what to do and he said that you's (sic) all would help me." During the Depression FSO could no longer support the 12,500 individuals relying on the agency for welfare support and the city agreed to provide welfare relief for the unemployed. However, the city had very strict eligibility requirements for their financial support and FSO continued to support those families who did not qualify for city support, including single and separated women, standing in opposition to the societal belief that women should be with and supported by husbands. The advocacy work of the agency continued during World War II when FSO provided support to families facing persecution and were restricted from accessing services because they were Jewish or of Eastern European descent. During the 1960's FSO was one of the first social service organizations to provide education and support programs for parents. In the 1970's and 1980's FSO advocated for Ottawa's first women's shelter and for an end to homelessness through the provision of affordable housing. In the early years of the HIV/AIDS crisis, FSO launched a pilot program



to support clients and staff from Bruce House, Ottawa's residence for people living with HIV/AIDS.

By 2003-2004, the agency mission stated that FSO was a social service organization that *helps individuals and families in distress or at risk to attain greater health and wellbeing, improve their coping skills, and achieve their potential by providing counselling, education and advocacy*. Within the 2003 list of FSO values two that stand out are that services be available without restriction due to gender, age, ethnicity, culture or sexual orientation and that additional effort is required to ensure that those who are disadvantaged have an equal opportunity to access services. At that time there were individuals on staff and in management at FSO who identified, responded to and advocated for the rights of LGBTTTQ+ headed families to access services.¹ However, at that time FSO the organization was not yet ready or equipped to safely create or publically promote itself as an inclusive and equal environment for LGBTTTQ+ families. FSO was in the early stages of this process and had taken the beginning steps of writing inclusive language into the mission and values but on the front line through program delivery and service accessibility FSO was not demonstrating in practice what was written into the mission and values.

While the agency was evolving, there was FSO staff involvement in important community initiatives for LGBTTTQ+ families. For example, as part of their work for FSO a staff member was actively involved with the Rainbow Families Coalition (RFC). The RFC was a newly developing coalition of service providers and LGBTTTQ+ parents who were identifying the needs and strengths of LGBTTTQ+ families in the Ottawa communities and designing models of service in order to better serve those families. The FSO staff involvement in this coalition placed FSO, as a mainstream organization, into direct involvement with ground-breaking leaders and advocates for LGBTTTQ+ services. At this time, FSO as an agency, was not considered to be a leader in serving LGBTTTQ+ families and communities.

The RFC was conducting research and pilot testing the best methods of providing support to LGBTTTQ+ parents and families. By early 2005, the RFC had completed a review of the Canadian literature on LGBTTTQ+ families, held two roundtable dialogues to assess and bring awareness to the challenges, strengths and needs of LGBTTTQ+ families and developed a model of family life education for LGBTTTQ+ families. In working with the RFC, FSO was in a similar situation as the other main stream organizational members of the RFC. The internal climate of social service agencies throughout Ottawa and FSO was a slow waking of agency awareness of the extensive internal organizational growth and learning

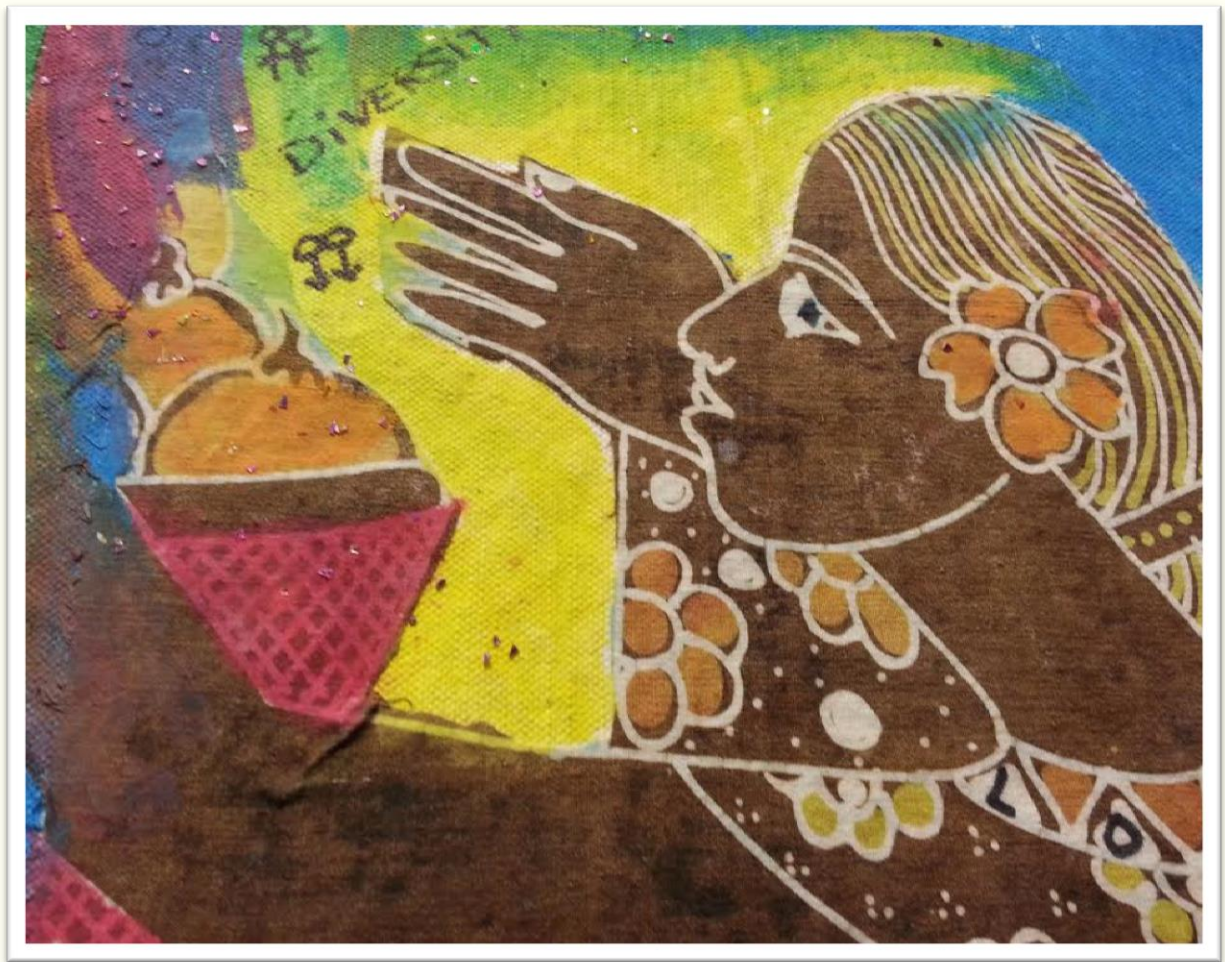
¹ In 2003, the acronym used was GLBT to define the gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans communities. In this document, the LGBTTTQ+ acronym is used to define the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two spirit, questioning and multiple diverse communities.



needed in order to be known, trusted and prepared as an organization that could accurately and safely deliver services and programs that met the needs of LGBTTTQ+ individuals, families and communities.

FSO was committed to change at all levels; agency, service and community. In 2005, FSO took a significant step forward when it collaborated with Pink Triangle Services (PTS) and the RFC to apply for three-year funding from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (now Economic and Social Development Canada) for a project entitled Community Development for Children of Rainbow Families. The successful outcome of this proposal and the launch of the Around the Rainbow project was a turning point for FSO, both internally and externally. The history of FSO carries homophobia, transphobia and biphobia and they have been expressed on many levels and in many ways throughout the organization. A challenge, and a strength, of the agency experience with Around the Rainbow is the fact that the ATR program staff self-identify as LGBTTTQ+, queer or trans, while the management team of FSO on majority do not self-identify as LGBTTTQ+, queer or trans. This means that the two staff teams have different lived experience and expertise in the area of serving LGBTTTQ+ families and individuals. Although the management team, and a majority of the agency staff identify as allies, the history of residual hurt and pain, power imbalances and systemic barriers means that FSO continues to unlearn, grow and relearn about LGBTTTQ+, queer and trans staff members, individuals, families and communities. FSO has held itself accountable for the barriers and hurt caused by its internal and external homophobia, transphobia and biophobia. Systemic and organizational change is a slow, but rewarding process. The Around the Rainbow program is the legacy of the early years of work to serve LGBTTTQ+ families and individuals. In 2014, FSO has continued its commitment as an organization to grow, unlearn and reach out to LGBTTTQ+ identified families, communities and staff members. FSO is a safer and more welcoming organization then it was in 2005 and it works daily on greater structural and social changes. This honest and public positioning assists FSO in being accountable to LGBTTTQ+, queer and trans staff members, individuals, families and communities.

The dedicated and persistent education, awareness and advocacy work of the ATR staff have offered learnings and openings into the hearts and minds of their colleagues at FSO. In response, FSO staff have taken brave steps forward into examining their own words, thoughts and behaviours which contribute, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to homophobia, transphobia and biphobia. This ongoing individual and collective effort is what strengthens FSO as a main stream organization in providing LGBTTTQ+ services and advocating for social and systemic change. As FSO continues to break down silos and combine efforts to heal the damage and violence caused by homophobia, transphobia and biphobia the agency plays an important role in extinguishing further oppressions and isolations related to discrimination and inequality.





THE OTTAWA COMMUNITY FROM 2001 – 2005

Ottawa LGBTTTQ+ communities and allies have a long history of supporting, caring and coming together. At the beginning of 2001, LGBTTTQ+ headed families were contacting community family and health service providers looking for resources, programs and supports that welcomed and reflected their families. The family and health service providers who were LGBTTTQ+ identified and allies began speaking to one another by phone, email and in person about the requests for LGBTTTQ+ specific services they were receiving and the dearth of available services to support the families. At this time, most of the service providers were from community health, family resource or early years' centres.

These requests for services and informal conversations between service providers regarding the gaps in services for LGBTTTQ+ headed families in Ottawa began the movement towards dialogue and action which resulted in the current supports and services for LGBTTTQ+ communities and families. The gap in services was unsettling for the families and the service providers. LGBTTTQ+ identified and allied service providers decided to meet together to explore ways in which they could collectively address the gaps in services for LGBTTTQ+ headed families. Together they formed the Rainbow Families Coalition.

The mission of the Rainbow Families Coalition was to develop services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two spirit and queer parents and their children. The Rainbow Families Coalition identified the importance of surveying LGBTTTQ+ families in order to hear first voice regarding their issues, needs and strengths. The surveys were grounded in the early community conversation groups and provided a more in-depth and thorough assessment of Ottawa LGBTTTQ+ families and communities.

The Coalition was an important outcome of the report entitled Rainbow Families and Community Roundtables: A Needs Assessment. The roundtable participants came from a wide range of organizations including, Centretown Community Health Centre, Family Services Ottawa, Ten Oaks Project, Parent Resource Centres, Ottawa Police Services, Pink Triangle Youth, Child and Youth Net, Military Family Resource Centre, Temple Israel, Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, Unitarian Church, Youth Services Bureau, Men's Project, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) National Equity Division, Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG), Egale, community physicians and psychiatrists, school teachers, principals and daycare workers, LGBTTTQ+ parents and allies.

The service providers recognized and acknowledged that the organizations they were employed by provided services for families and parents, but were not inclusive of LGBTTTQ+ headed families. Existing programs, support, education and resources were directed towards heterosexual families which reinforced invisibility and non-recognition of LGBTTTQ+ headed families. Given this concern, the service providers decided to listen to the needs and voices of LGBTTTQ+ headed families before they made changes to their organizations. The outcome of their meetings with LGBTTTQ+ headed families was to bring other LGBTTTQ+ families together and hold a series of community conversations/focus groups. The service providers and LGBTTTQ+ headed families met together. The focus groups were held at the following locations: Centretown Community Health Centre, Minwaashin Lodge, Pinecrest - Queensway Community Health Centre - Ontario Early Years Centre West, and Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre. At each focus group, participants were asked four questions:

1. What is the definition of family?
2. What are some of the barriers and challenges gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, two-spirit or queer (LGBTTTQ+) families face?
3. What are the strengths of LGBTTTQ+ families?
4. What are the services and supports needed within the Ottawa community for LGBTTTQ+ families?

Families shared their experiences with systematic homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism. For example, they noted that the school system did not take them seriously as a family, and failed to provide forms that reflected their family structure. These types of experiences underscored systemic discrimination as a major barrier to LGBTTTQ+ families within the Ottawa community. In addition, participants recognized a lack of peer support services for parents and children of LGBTTTQ+ families.





RAINBOW FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Family Services à la famille Ottawa (FSFO) seeks to recognize obstacles and barriers particular to groups and individuals in our community, and to develop creative ways in which to alleviate and address these challenges. Since 2003 FSFO and the Rainbow Families Coalition (RFC) have worked to develop services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit and queer (GLBTTQ) parents and their children. The RFC recognized the necessity to survey GLBTTQ families to identify their issues, needs and strengths.

There is a dearth of Canadian research on same-sex parents and their children. In reviewing the existing literature, parental suitability has been the primary focus with little or no consideration for the needs and strengths of sexual minority families. Thus far, research focusing on Trans parents and their children as gender minority families - whether considering their issues, their strengths or their needs, is absent all together. Our summary report and annotated bibliography summarizes what the literature has to say.

In 2001, Family Services began a series of Roundtables, inviting diverse members from communities to engage in topics that are pertinent to family life. Roundtables have come to symbolize a respectful and democratic process for sharing ideas and discussing important issues. Specifically, a Roundtable is a gathering of 12-18 invited individuals from diverse perspectives within the community. It is an open, respectful, and inclusive process. Participants are asked to observe and share ideas, to move away from developing consensus and simple solutions and to open to new possibilities in a spirit of curiosity. The setting fosters interaction and creativity, providing a spectrum of ideas, observations, and recommendations of well-considered opinions and deep passions. The result is a broad and representative glimpse into the views of the people, producing a basis for informed decision-making for service providers, social service systems, and new strategies for development.

The GLBTTQ community has been surveyed extensively over the past five years by community groups and organizations, for instance Pink Triangle Services Wellness Survey and needs assessments completed for the GLBT Resource Centre. The surveys provide us a comprehensive overview of issues facing GLBTTQ individuals and provide us with some insight into some family issues. No group thus far has looked specifically at the needs of GLBTTQ parents and their children. The Rainbow Family Coalition decided on a roundtable process as an ideal mechanism to capture meaningful information on families. This method



would also create an opportunity for members of the GLBTTQ community and allies to engage in dialogue around family issues.

In November 2004 the Coalition invited over fifty people representing various sectors in the community, mainstream and GLBTTQ agencies, organizations and individuals to participate in roundtables on GLBTTQ family issues.² Although invited from certain agencies or groups, the participants were asked to dialogue as individuals and not as representatives of any particular group. Thirty-four people participated in one of two roundtables organized in December 2004 and January 2005.

Each of the two groups spent the day sharing their opinions and experiences of family. Discussion occurred in a safe, non-threatening atmosphere. Participants used the talking 'circle' approach, speaking into the centre of the circle rather than directly to one another. Consensus and agreement were neither expected nor encouraged; in fact, it was the diversity of perspectives around the table from which emerged a holistic portrait of family. Participants were asked to dialogue on broad questions:

- What is family to you?
- What challenges and barriers do you or your family live with in our community?
- What creativity, resilience and strength does your family bring to each other, to the community?
- If you could create a community that would nurture and support your family what could that community look like?

Here is what we discovered:

Family – A Broad Definition

The notion of a single, exclusive definition of family has disappeared. In fact, family has become increasingly challenging to define and such definitions are best understood by those living in these relationships. The typical Canadian family does not appear to exist and this finding is consistent with other roundtables on the family. Families are structured diversely and may include two opposite sex parents with children, same sex couples with and without children, childless single persons, single parents, blended families, ones' community and friends.

² Participants included people affiliated with Parent Resource Centre, Ottawa Police Services, Pink Triangle Youth, Child and Youth Net, Military Family Resource Centre, Temple Israel, Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, Unitarian Church, Youth Services Bureau, Men's Project, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) National Equity Division, Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG), Egale, community physicians and psychiatrists, school teachers, principals and daycare workers, GLBTTQ parents and allies.



“A family is not defined by children or traditional forms. It should not be limited to the nuclear definition of family.”

“Family as we have understood it can be defined as an institution of social control that can be very damaging for people. One only has to consider violence and inequity. “

“If family is not about choice then it can be very damaging.”

Participants characterized a broad range of inclusive relationships from nuclear families with parents and children, to friends and a caring community, to seniors living with adult children. Family becomes an issue of both biology and choice. Emotional connection appears to be far more salient than prescribed roles and responsibilities and often, move beyond the bonds of biology and conjugality. Such connections are seen as solid, yet dynamic – a foundation that permits fluidity, evolution and change.

“Family becomes synonymous with relationship, both good and bad.”

“Family is a bond, an attachment of love and commitment.”

“People who commit to loving and caring and supporting each other.”

“Family shares life goals, bonded by a history, a present and a future all of which remains stable yet can be redefined.”

Families of Origin

An interesting focus emerged for GLBTTQ participants: the role and importance of family of origin. Whether born into or adopted into original families, our family plays an important role, imparting societal norms, teaching family values, educating about the world, and meeting basic physical, social, spiritual and emotional needs. For some, this foundation was established in an environment of care and nurturance and for others, it was a place of pain, discrimination and trauma. Roundtable participants spoke with a spirit of compassion for themselves and for those who were entrusted with their care. They expressed hope for healing and for meaningful connection despite the pain from the past. There exists both a deep sense of sadness and loss as well as a sense of acceptance of human imperfection.



“Family is a place where we are known, where we are our best and our worst.”

“Family is about relationship and about risk – risk for loss, risk for violence and homophobia; and also risk to be loved and accepted.”

“Family has required deep unlearning from the pollution and damage. It can set up unreasonable objectives and impossible expectations. At the same time I hold out hope for my own family to be truly authentic...I hold out great hope for the future.”

Public Policy

Traditional definitions of family are entrenched in policies and laws that affect families. As a society, we have yet to address the expanding reality of family often leaving GLBTTQ families without recognition or representation. This has a tremendous impact on same-sex and trans parents and their children. Consequently, they do not enjoy family benefits and are often excluded from family policy. While this is changing, for instance with the passage of Bill C-38 which gives equal marriage rights to same sex partners, there is more ground to cover. Families are left vulnerable in certain life situations such as separation, child custody, illness and death of a partner.

“We need to protect ourselves from the racist, sexist, homophobic view of families; government needs to adopt laws for things like living wills and powers of attorney, marriage and adoption, to protect diverse families.”

“I look at my family and wonder about Canada’s future with same sex marriage. It needs to be entrenched in law, in human rights, in order to protect parents and their kids.”

“There is a fear here for me, of government, of losing our children if laws do not keep pace with social changes.”

“We are good parents with great kids. We are the same as other families.”

Visibility

Participants expressed mixed feeling about the visibility of GLBTTQ families in the broader culture. On one hand, the creation of laws and policies to protect rights for GLBTTQ families legitimizes their families and relationships, and create a higher level of recognition and visibility within society. At the same time, there is a sense of trepidation as families move to the centre of public discourse and become more visible within our



communities. At moments there is an experience of being a 'poster parents' for the same-sex marriage debate; some observe inauthentic gestures of inclusion and are subjected to a kind of tokenism by community leaders and policy makers. Others continue to feel the impact from overt discrimination and violence early in life and sadly, many others will continue to experience violence, transphobia and homophobia. Visibility exacerbates fear and may result in further hate crimes and violence. As the debate around GLBTTQ rights heats up so will the backlash.

"Visibility is about seeing the person in front of you."

"I always feel that I am perceived as straight when I walk down the street especially when I am with my children. When I am with my partner perhaps I am more visible as a lesbian. I wish there was a different mentality where heterosexuality was not assumed."

"I have had many years of being harassed; I was regularly assaulted and beaten up because I 'looked' gay."

"There is pressure to be the poster child for gay parents. Should my child be gay or Trans then it will immediately be seen as negative and blamed on the fact that he has raised by gay fathers. As gay fathers, should he be Trans or gay then it would be a bonus, because we would be supportive and accepting."

"We as a community have become more visible through the media yet there is an aura of negativity. They speak to my experience without knowing me."

Community

Participants said that families and children experience isolation and separation from family and community. There is a sense of isolation from the straight community because of experiences and fear of homophobia and transphobia; additionally, there is a sense of disconnection from the GLBTTQ community when people decided on lives of committed relationships, marriage and children. Participants expressed a desire for the GLBTTQ community and the larger community to come to terms with the changing face of family in order to nurture and support all families. Families continue to struggle to find and develop the support they require. They seek a community where everyone can experience nurturance, acceptance, kindness and inclusion. This will include the experience within our extended families, our schools and neighbourhoods, our places of work and worship.



"I would like to live on a street with a mix of queer and straight families."

"I need schools that accept our family model and do not ask stupid questions like: 'who is the mother?'"

"I have community within the queer community. I have friends who provide childcare, friends who function like surrogate 'dads' and 'grammas' to my children."

"I dream of a community with 'no fences', 'no garage doors'."

"I have supportive children who take on the care of an aging parent and her partner or spouse."

Elders

Our senior participants reminded us that we need to take an expansive examination of family as it includes more than parents with young children. As our population ages we will increasingly need to be aware of how our communities support seniors and how seniors support younger generations.

Two participants commented that the ability to maintain their independence and to maintain their relationships with partners and families is critical to wellness and quality of life. This reality is true for GLBTTQ seniors however, participants noted that layering GLBTTQ issues could create additional challenges. Society tends to view all seniors as asexual, as not requiring or desiring the intimacies of a meaningful relationship. This bias can be stronger when considering same-sex or trans relationships during senior years. At any time of life, there can be issues coming out with extended families and there can be experiences of homophobia, transphobia, isolation, abuse and violence. Gay, lesbian and trans grandparents may be shut out, quite painfully, of their grandchildren's lives.

Health can be an anxiety-ridden issue. Participants conveyed concerns about whether they would be taken care of in a time of illness or incapacity, and whether others will care for their partner if they also experience health concerns. Health care systems and providers may not consult with a same sex partner around medical issues. Family can equally exclude same sex partners from health related decisions. Adult children may cross all kinds of boundaries in the event of a death of one partner, ignoring the rights of the surviving partner who is unprotected by property and probate laws. Wills can be unrelentingly disputed because probate law ignores the legitimacy of same sex relationships.



“What will our health issues do to our children? The roles with our children are blurring as they care for us.”

“Children may not be quite sure what to do if mother dies and they are left to care for mother’s aging partner.”

“Isolation is a real problem; we need a community that can adopt a grandparent.”

“When their parents died, the children’s gay grandparents were denied access to their grandchildren because the family members who did get custody were homophobic. The law provided no protection.”

Ethno-cultural communities

GLBTTQ people and families within the ethno cultural communities will continue to struggle with the experience and impact of racism. Racism is experienced in the broader community, and the intersection of racism, homophobia and transphobia will have compounding impacts for the individual, for the family and for the community.

“As a person of colour my visibility is forced, apparent, I have no choice about my visibility and the resulting racism that I may experience.”

In addition to racism, participants also said they experience homophobia and transphobia within their cultural or religious community. They experience invisibility around their sexual orientation and gender identity. Some cultural communities assume that no one is GLBTTQ. These realities have resulted in people being out in some places and in the closet in other places, particularly with extended family and within one’s cultural or religious environment.

“Within Asian culture, particularly in the Chinese community, it is assumed that no one is gay.”

“I lived and continue to live in a much closeted way when I am with my family yet I am very out and visible everywhere else. My parents are visiting Ottawa for the first time and this will be the first time I need to be back in the closet here.”

“I feel that I am pushing the barriers to deconstruct the myths and the barriers, pushing the boundaries between being gay and the culture I grew up in.”



The GLBTTQ Community

Parents carry numerous responsibilities, struggle with conflicting demands and priorities and have the additional challenge of perhaps raising their children and maintaining their families in an often times discriminatory, hostile and isolating environment. Support is critical. Many families have created support, nurturance and connection within the GLBTTQ community and from these connections have created extended families of choice.

"I have community within the queer community, friends who provide childcare, surrogate dads and grammas..."

"I knew that, fostering children with many needs, I would need to develop a community. I let friends, family know that I also needed their commitment for support, for a soft place to land. This extended family is critical for me and my children and they are coming through for us."

In all communities, we face the challenge of accepting and celebrating diversity. Racism, for instance, exists in the queer community as it exists in the broader community and some participants have felt discrimination, such as being assaulted with racial slurs and comment. This prejudice results in ostracism and invisibility within the GLBTTQ community. To be met with another kind of oppression, racism, when people look to a community for support and when they experience a shared oppression such as homophobia and heterosexism, the experience can be devastating.

Participants stated that confronting the barriers, biases and prejudice within the community presents real opportunities for growth and acceptance. At the same time, confronting internal struggles can create a sense of vulnerability in a community already marginalized by the larger society.

"Before we start talking about diversity we need to look within our own community, the GLBT community. There exists here, an US and THEM mentality. Even here we need to fit into the box."

"As a visible minority I feel invisible within my community. People who stand beside you do not."

Trans people also experience an awareness of invisibility around their issues and participants challenged the gay and lesbian community to address genderism and



transphobia within the community. They expressed that this is equally true in the broader social context where gender identity and gender expression are rigidly adhered to social constructs.

In the GLBTTQ community there is some measure of dialogue about Trans issues. The challenge for the Trans community, however, can feel daunting in the face of fear and pain over losing small connections to allies and to community support. It can be exhausting for people who are marginalized to explain and 'out' themselves constantly, to educate people about their concerns and issues, and to challenge discrimination. Fatigue exists for Trans people and their families.

"I define myself as 'gender-queer', as someone in the middle of genders. Gender roles create barriers; we all have little boxes about who fits in where. If we move outside these boxes, it challenges our notions of who people are and where they fit in."

"I feel less comfortable in challenging within my own queer community where I feel I am asked to explain myself. We need to constantly challenge ourselves around gender assumptions of male, female and other."

"The gay/lesbian community has been more opposed to me, first as trans and now, that I am a woman, than mainstream society. The work needs to start with ourselves, within the GLBTTQ community, to be supportive to all."

"Bisexuality, I do not like the label but I would best define myself as bi. My fear in coming out is that I would be neither accepted in the heterosexual community nor in the homosexual community. I know myself, that I am androgynous and monogamous."

"Gender is fluid. We need to have the right and the ability to self-identify in ways that make sense to us."

Resilience, Strength and Creativity

The impact of systemic homophobia and transphobia is far-reaching. However, GLBTTQ citizens have shown tremendous strength and courage in living authentic lives, raising children, contributing in workplaces and neighbourhoods, all while advocating for social change. Community becomes essential in reducing isolation and maintaining support.



“The fights and constant need to stay involved are a bit energy-sucking. In order for me to be resilient and teach resilience, I need soft places to land. Community is crucial; people I do not have to fight with and explain things to, places that are safe and protected in my life, places I can vent.”

Being a part of community is a two way street. People have found strength and empowerment in service, participation and advocacy, many becoming leaders in schools, neighbourhoods, organizations and groups. Advocates and community leaders, both individuals and parents, aspire to a more open community for the children, and many said they hope to role model diversity and action for a younger generation. This connection to children is a powerful motivator.

“I get involved in education, after school activities, on parent council, taking on leadership roles so they know where I stand. Advocate for children and try to make changes to the curriculum. Then when hard stuff comes in, they already know me and somewhat trust me.”

“Silence kills. You are modeling for your children by getting involved and being a strong and healthy leader. If you want change then advocate for it.”

“After we adopted our son I was more committed to speaking out and naming being gay. I am still afraid sometimes to say the things I say, but for him I have to do it. The more contact I have with the community and the school, the better it will be for my child.”

“We have courage and bravery, that is, admitting we are afraid and doing it anyway. Fight oppression even though you may be afraid of it.”

“I feel passionately about children having a voice and the support to use their voice. If we give children the power they will surprise you. They have an intuitive sense of justice. Trust them to do what is right for them. Much depends on the environment, the role modeling that happens in the home.

People develop connections that foster hope and provide meaningful relationships in their lives. Community is about relationships with the people around us. For participants whose extended families expressed openness and support, they felt important sources of strength, comfort and courage. Despite experiences of pain and discrimination people moved forward in their lives, reconnected in different ways to family and friends and established



new attachments in families of choice. Some have formed intimate relationships with a partner and many couples have included children in their lives.

"I had a commitment ceremony with my partner of twenty years. This gives me strength, comfort and courage. Each of our families was present and came together for the first time. They were there for us."

"I feel blessed with an extended family. Humour is present even in the most emotionally painful times, it is alive and well."

"When members of my circle, my family and my community, stand up for me against homophobia, it feels very good that people will support me and that people can change."

"Grieving brings family together, hearts and minds working together. Losing my cousin (*to suicide*) makes other family members more motivated to work on accepting other queer youth (*in our family*). My mother said to me, 'I am okay with the fact that you are gay and I am working on your father'. Overall, losing my cousin has led to a creative process in my family to move further on their homophobia. My homophobic father said: 'If there were no labels and we all liked each other, this would have never happened'."

Resilience in family is about relationships, relationships as works in progress, always changing and making every day special. I accept that these relationships are constantly evolving with my family and perhaps one day it will mean unconditional love for me, love without a '...but'."

While people continue to experience the impact of homophobia, transphobia, violence, tragedy and loss they remain grounded in hope. The personal and internal resources that each person draws upon are powerful testimonies to courage, resilience and creativity of the human spirit even in the face of adversity. Many said that they draw on personal philosophies and values, often spiritual, as they challenge prejudice and search for strength. They consider the lens through which they view the world and reflect on their own attitudes and belief systems. The social conditions in which they live have made them aware, self-reflective and perhaps expansive in their views on the world. The result is an underlying theme of compassion and acceptance. A small dose of humour has taken many far in their journey.



“It is strength to be able to see the good things that happen. To be able to talk and name things, to say that there is much that is negative and at the same time to see the clarity we have when we can also see the strength to deal with it. The clarity to see what we do have in our families, to speak honestly with our families about the challenges, our experiences, sharing and growing with these experiences. Action forces you to live your truth, honesty force you to action and to live up to the things you say to your children. “

“Respect within my family, to say no, to have the strength to apologize and to say we are sorry; balance where people in the family have strengths in different areas yet have similar philosophies and values.”

“Sexuality is fluid and gender can be fluid. Seeing the cracks in the box can be great. This gives me hope that my children will have a refreshing and insightful perspective.”

“What glasses do we wear to view our world? Upbringing, culture, education will affect and influence how we respond to, how we will be impacted by and how we interpret the outside world.”

“First and foremost for me is honesty. Honesty has come with age and at this point I do not want to live my life lying or covering up. So I don’t, and my honesty keeps me here with both feet on the ground. There is no need to pretend. “

“I’ve had enough of putting energy into battles. I’m at a place where I can understand and be ok that you don’t like or accept my life. I won’t accept ignorance or disrespectful behaviour, nor will I pretend that I’m something that I’m not, but I’ll forgive you. South Africa is an example for me, of forgiveness. If you want to move forward, then you have to forgive and we need to learn to forgive as a community. Only in releasing anger toward my parents have I learned how to love them well, without dishonoring my own choices and family structure. I need to pass on these tools and strategies to my children.”

Vision: Community and Celebration

Individuals and families need connection and community to thrive and to live meaningful lives. The vision is consistent and powerful. This is a vision for a community that moves away from discrimination, moves beyond tolerance and arrives at a place of acceptance and celebration for diversity. We would create neighbourhoods that engage all citizens in a spirit of collectivity, accessibility and safety for everyone. Equality, compassion and forgiveness for other human beings would be the underlying value in everything we



do. Intentional families would expand and integrate the needs of every generation from babies to seniors. We would begin to see people not labels.

"I would like to see more blending between the heterosexual world and homosexual world, a way to create more acceptance not just tolerance, for families with children, we need each other, we need the understanding and we need the support, all of us together, gay and straight."

"I would like to have a world where there is no need for activism toward acceptance and tolerance. Acceptance and celebration of everyone become a given, it simply is."

"There is strength in compassion. To show strength is to be compassionate, it is cowardice to be cruel. We need to build a world where we are more compassionate as a society, compassionate toward others and toward ourselves."

"A society of safety, justice and wisdom."

In Conclusion

Participants described their involvement in the roundtable process as "profoundly meaningful". They connected with other people in the community and felt a sense of safety and acceptance. They experienced hope and reassurance that people from different perspectives and share common ground. Many expressed a call to action to transform communities toward acceptance of greater diversity. The barriers that families in the GLBTTQ community face demonstrate that socially we have a journey to take in order to become more inclusive and accepting of all members of our community. Several months later some participants continue to express positive reactions from their participation and continue to feel a positive impact and learning from their experience. The richness of the roundtable discussions have been incorporated into our recommendations for future action, our summary report of the literature, our GLBTTQ parents and schools toolkit, and into the pilot support group offered in collaboration with FSFO, Centretown Community Health Centre, Ten Oaks Project and Rainbow Families children and parents.

Rainbow Families and Community Roundtables Report

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/1-Rainbow-Families-and-Community-Roundtables-Report.pdf>



AROUND THE RAINBOW – THE PROGRAM

Training and Public Education 2005 - 2014

In 2005 Family Services Ottawa (FSO) received a three year grant for the Around the Rainbow (ATR) project from Human Resources Social Development Canada (HRSDC) to further develop the model of community development, training and public education. This was the first time in its history that FSO launched a program specifically designed to meet the needs of LGBTTTQ+ families. ATR was described as a project working together with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two spirit, questioning and multiple diverse communities (LGBTTTQ+) to support the inclusion of diverse families in our childcare and early childhood education systems, as well as within schools and our community. The ATR project had the following goals:

- To reduce the incidence of discrimination against children growing up in LGBTTTQ+ families;
- To reduce the sense of isolation that LGBTTTQ+ families experience as their children enter the preschool community;
- To increase LGBTTTQ+ parent and caregiver knowledge of their children's rights, to increase the skills at advocating with service systems on behalf of their children, and to increase connection to other LGBTTTQ+ families and the communities we live in;
- To create a more inclusive response from the preschool and educational systems, to the needs of children of LGBTTTQ+ parents, caregivers and families;
- To outreach to isolated LGBTTTQ+ families and their children.

FSO hired ATR program staff comprised of a Coordinator and a Community Developer (see Job Descriptions in Appendices). The program was managed by the FSO Director of Community Programs.

At the beginning of the project, the ATR staff worked closely with the Rainbow Families coalition, LGBTTTQ+ families and community organizations to research, review, develop and produce toolkits, guides and resources as per the funding requirements of HRSDC. The program developed the three toolkits noted below. At the time, the thinking was that well-researched, static documents were the best resource to provide to agencies looking to serve LGBTTTQ+ headed families.



**Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers Working
with LGBTTTQ+ parents and their children**

<http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/resource-kit2010.pdf>

Toolkit for LGBTTTQ+ Parents/Guardians

<http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Parent-Toolkit-2006-EN.pdf>

Resource Kit

<http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/resource-kit2010.pdf>

Support and information for the toolkits was provided by LGBTTTQ+ families, educators and service providers. When completed, the toolkits were promoted and disseminated throughout the Ottawa area to local organizations and community centres. Following distribution, the ATR staff began to receive invitations to train professionals who worked in settings with parents, caregivers and children. Requests for training came from early childhood education centres, daycares, recreational centres, schools, health and social service agencies and other organizations interested in professional development training related to LGBTTTQ+ families and diverse family structures. The toolkits laid the foundation for the ATR training curriculum and provided an excellent resource for the trainees to refer to and work from in their organizations and schools once the training was completed. In this way, ATR provided a resource for ongoing organizational learning and development.

Training and public education is one of the foundations of the Around the Rainbow program; it is a key resource that FSO offers to Ottawa based organizations for their professional development and diversity awareness training. From 2006 to the present day ATR continues to adapt, expand and revise training and public education regarding LGBTTTQ+ headed families.

In 2013, ATR made an important change to the training by separating sexual orientation from gender and gender identity. This was done in response to the frequency of questions and requests for resources about gender creative and trans children and youth and their families. ATR staff attended trainings, collected resources and information based on the ongoing research publications of Rainbow Health Ontario, Gender Spectrum, Gender Creative Kids Canada. ATR staff established two training choices for education, health and

social service providers. When requests for training are received the ATR educator will confirm with the organization if they are looking for training regarding LGBTTTQ+ Families or Gender Identity and Gender Expression.

ATR has separated the trainings because each topic demands its own specific training time and discussion period. Over the years of training, the ATR staff team has found that this method of separation currently allows time to go in depth with the topics and the recipients of the training more time to process information and ask questions specific to their profession.

In 2014, in addition to the original training offerings, ATR training topics now include LGBTTTQ+ parents/caregivers and their children, gender identity and gender expression in children and youth and transitional safety planning for gender creative and trans students who are socially transitioning in schools. The program has not developed toolkits for each of these topics, however the training curriculum has expanded to meet the requested needs of LGBTTTQ+ families, gender creative and trans children, youth and their parents/caregivers, educators and service providers. ATR's involvement in round table discussions, focus groups, community consultations and extensive documentation of the gaps in services provided the program with excellent community research, resources and toolkits to share throughout the training session.



**Equity
Inclusion
Training
Education
Counselling
Outreach
Support
Resources**



**To book a training workshop
or public educator contact**



Beck Hood

(613) 725-3601 ext. 105
312 Parkdale Ave, Ottawa, ON K1Y 4X5

bhood@familyservicesottawa.org

www.familyservicesottawa.org



LGBTQ+ Around the Rainbow

Around the Rainbow @lgbttqiafamily
Family Service Ottawa



BECOME A FAN

***Providing free training
and public education
on gender identity,
gender expression or
sexual orientation***



Around the Rainbow: A Program of Family Services Ottawa

The LGBTTTQIA+ acronym can mean Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two Spirit, Trans, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Queerspawn, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, and more...

Education & Training:

- Human Rights
- Gender Identity
- Gender Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Books
- Resources
- Inclusive language
- Community supports

The Trainer and Public Educator...

- Shares resources
- Provides training
- Undertakes Public Education
- Answers Questions



Around the Rainbow is part of a full range of education, counselling and community support services offered

by Family Services Ottawa.

The Trainer and Public Educator will adjust the training to fit the educational and workshop needs of your school, organization, health and social service agency.

????????????????

Do you have questions about gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation?

Pamphlet

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2-Pamphlet.pdf>



Managing Training Requests

Most of the training requests received by Around the Rainbow are from health, social service, recreational, community organizations, schools or early childhood education centres. Almost all requests are received via email or telephone. It is important to recognize that the person requesting training may not have a clear idea of what they are looking for in the training except for knowing that they would like professional development training about the LGBTTTQ+ communities. In order to provide the best possible service, the ATR staff asks questions about what services their organization offers and what prompted their phone call to request training. It is common that the person calling is a leader in their organization in terms of social justice equality and advocacy or that there have been experiences within the organization where they feel the staff team needs more support, education and awareness regarding the diversity of LGBTTTQ+ communities. The person requesting training is most often heterosexual and cis- identified with a basic knowledge of LGBTTTQ+ communities so the language used in the conversation needs to be basic, gentle and respectful. The person requesting training may not understand the differences between sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression. This differentiation will need to be clarified within the first communication. For example, people will request LGBTTTQ+ training when they are really requesting training regarding how to support a gender creative or trans student.

Below is an example of how ATR staff assess and identify a request for training/education:

1. Why are you calling/emailing today?
2. What services does your organization/centre/school offer? If it is a school, inquire if it is elementary or high school.
3. Are you looking for training for your whole staff team or a part of the staff team?
Sometimes the organization/centre/school does not invite the front line administration team to the trainings and this can be problematic because the front line administration team is most often the first point of contact for receiving services. If possible, try to have all staff attend the trainings or offer to do a follow up training with the administration team.
4. What type of training are you looking for? If the answer is general LGBTTTQ+ training then move into asking more specific questions such as, 'Are you looking for training about parents who are LGBTTTQ+ identified and their children?' or 'Are you looking for training about gender creative and trans children and youth?'
5. What level of understanding do you feel your staff team currently has? Basic, intermediate, advanced? It is important to have a solid understanding of where the staff team is located in terms of their learning so that the time spent preparing for



the training is accurate and the benefit of the training to the staff meets their needs and expectations.

6. Once a clear understanding of why they are calling and what they are looking for in terms of training then determine the length of training. Training times can from 1 -3 hours, half day, full day and multiple day trainings. It is really dependent on the time allocated by the organization/centre/school and the level of in-depth training requested.
7. Follow up emails may take place as specifics for the training are organized. If there has been a gap in time since the training was booked a reminder email about the training should go out a week before the training and the day before the training.
8. On the day of the training it is best to arrive a half hour before the training begins but because of where the training takes place sometimes the organization/centre/school requests that arrival time is 15 minutes before the training begins. The 15 minute arrival time can pose a problem if there are computer issues with compatibility, power points, uploading videos, sound systems or other unknown challenges that may arise.
9. Always make sure to have the PowerPoint slides on two external memory sticks and sent to an email which is easily accessible from a public location, example gmail.

Training/Education about Gender Identity and Gender Expression

ATR also receives requests related to gender, including for resources and social transitional planning support. Most often these will include the provision of educational training to elementary and secondary school staff teams consisting of principals, teachers, support staff and administration. Many of these requests come about as the result of the parents of gender creative, gender independent and trans children and youth sharing ATR pamphlets with their child's school principals and guidance counsellors.

In December of 2013, ATR received its first request from a school principal to provide training on gender expression and gender identity at a staff meeting. This request came about because a student in the school was planning to socially transition in January 2014. The school principal, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) support teacher, parents and student spoke together and agreed on having educational training and support for the whole staff team previous to the student's social transition.

By bringing in education and training on gender identity and gender expression for the staff team as well as establishing an in school transition plan previous to a student's school social transition it better prepares the teachers and administrators of the roles and responsibilities of the school in supporting the student. When possible the ATR educator



will co-train with an instructional coach from the Ottawa Carleton District School Board's Inclusive, Safe and Caring programs and a social worker from the Gender Diversity Clinic at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. The principals, administration and teachers are provided with information related to assisting a student's transitioning within their school based on the student's identified requests for accommodation. The student's right to confidentiality, affirmation of their identity and respect must be upheld at all times.

Each student is unique in their experience of social transitioning and their needs for accommodation within the school. Every social transition plan is created to match the needs of the individual; each one is different. For every transitioning student, it is important that the school works with the student, parent and teachers to ensure that the student is supported and feels safe.

Below are some of the most common types of first step accommodations that are requested by a student:

- Teachers and administrators informed of name and gender marker;
- Teachers and administrators affirm student's name and gender marker by using the correct name and pronoun;
- Official school records updated to reflect the student's name and gender marker;
- Provision of single stall washroom or all gender washroom;
- Ability to use the washroom of their gender identity;
- Ability to participate on the sports teams according to gender identity;
- Ability to change in the change room according to lived gender identity.





**Around the Rainbow utilizes and recommends the following resources
about supporting a student's social transitioning plan:**

Links to information about the Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Students in K-12
Schools

- New teacher resource aims to support transgender and transsexual students:
<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/news/Pages/default.aspx?newsid=1983984754&year=2012>
- Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Student in K-12 Schools:
<http://gendercreativekids.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Supporting-Transgender-and-Transsexual-Students-web.pdf>
- Transition Options for Gender Independent Children and Adolescents:
<http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/searchResults.cfm?mode=3&resourceID=192698e1-9762-e2c1-601d-10c17d024fa2>

Links to Rainbow Health Ontario pamphlets

- Advocating for Your Gender Independent Child:
<http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/searchResults.cfm?mode=3&resourceID=1952f224-b9fc-2f1d-a51b-4cdda77fbe57>
- Are you worried about your child's gender expression?:
<http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/searchResults.cfm?mode=3&resourceID=18e3bdac-f24d-4ee7-a570-458f2f9c650f>
- Transition Options for Gender Independent Children and Adolescents:
<http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/searchResults.cfm?mode=3&resourceID=192698e1-9762-e2c1-601d-10c17d024fa2>



The Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13) September 1, 2012

- Safe and Accepting Schools:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/safeschools.html>
- Bill 13- Accepting Schools Act:
[http://www.etfo.ca/AdviceForMembers/PRSMattersBulletins/Pages/Bill 13 - Accepting Schools Act.aspx](http://www.etfo.ca/AdviceForMembers/PRSMattersBulletins/Pages/Bill%2013-Accepting%20Schools%20Act.aspx)
- Creating Safe and Accepting Schools: Information for Parents about the Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13):
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/SafeAccepSchools.pdf>
- After the Happily Ever After:
<http://www.cca-ace.ca/education-canada/article/after-happily-ever-after>

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC)

- Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression:
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression>
- Gender Identity:
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/tag/code-grounds/gender-identity>
- Impacts of Strong Parental Support for Trans Youth:
<http://transpulseproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Impacts-of-Strong-Parental-Support-for-Trans-Youth-vFINAL.pdf>
- The Transgender Child:
<http://www.amazon.ca/The-Transgender-Child-Handbook-Professionals/dp/1573443182>



Services and Supports to Families 2005 – 2014

Community Art Projects

The HRSDC funding that Family Services Ottawa received for the Around the Rainbow project received funding from the Human Resources Social Development provided resources to bring community artists together with LGBTTTQ+ families. The purpose was to express and celebrate their families through art making as well as to demonstrate the use of art as a tool for awareness and systemic change. The first step in this component of the project was to host a roundtable event and receive input from families, community members, artists and service providers.

The roundtable event asked the following questions:

1. What is art and how is it a part of your family?
2. How can art help us celebrate the diversity of families in community settings?
3. Is it the artistic process, the final product or both that can help us celebrate our diverse community?

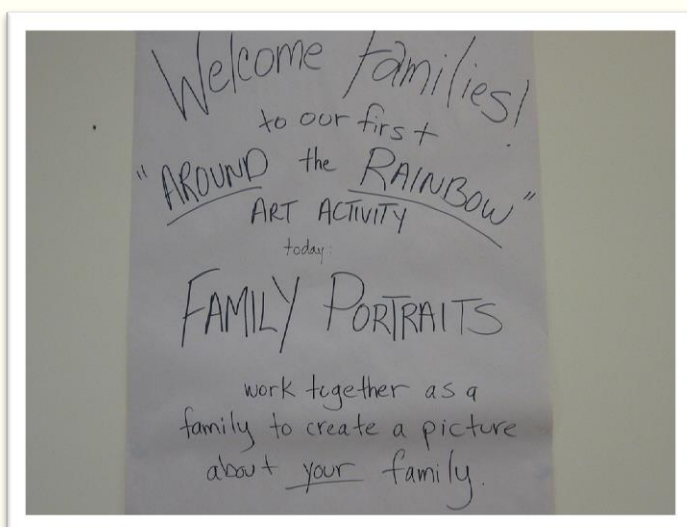
The roundtable was successful and provided the facilitators with empowering information and direction. After further review, reflection and preparation the Around the Rainbow program was ready to promote and host community arts based programming throughout Ottawa. A series of 13 community-based art projects took place which directly engaged and increased a sense of belonging and networking within LGBTTTQ+ families as well as building connections with allies in community settings.

Roundtable Report

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/4-Roundtable-Report.pdf>

Community Arts Projects

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/6-Community-Arts-Projects.pdf>





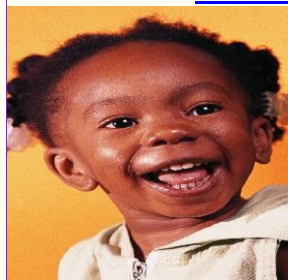
Around the Rainbow: Kids~Families~Community Community Art Event & Project Launch

10:00 am to 11:30: COMMUNITY ART EVENT

Gay, lesbian, bi, trans, two-spirit, queer (glbtq) families, and their allies are invited to participate in an interactive art workshop facilitated by a local community artist. Together you will create a work of art representing diverse families. Please register, information below.



Noon to 1:00 pm: PROJECT LAUNCH



We will be inviting media to our project launch and celebration. This will feature a brief presentation on our project and guest speakers from the education, and glbtq community. Join us in eating cake and outing our project to the community!

Around the Rainbow Project

Around the Rainbow is a three year project to identify the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, two spirit, and questioning (glbtq) families and to develop education, resources, and support for families and the community. We are working together with the glbtq community to support the inclusion of diverse families in our childcare and early childhood education systems, as well as within schools and the community.



When: January 24th, 2007
**Where: Family Services à la famille
Ottawa
312 Parkdale Avenue**

For more information and to register please contact:
Emily Troy
613-725-3601 ext.107
etroy@familyservicesottawa.org

2007 Art Event and Project

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/5-Poster.pdf>



Rainbow Families Group

The Rainbow Families group is a key service with a strong and foundational history that predates the 2005 formation of the Around the Rainbow program. Rainbow Families provides a safe place for parents to meet together and talk, a safe place for the children and youth to meet together and play as well as the sharing of resources specific to LGBTTTQ+ families.

The work of developing programs and services specific to the unique needs of LGBTTTQ+ families was gaining momentum throughout Ottawa in the early 2000's. The Rainbow Families group was officially established in 2004, out of the work of the Rainbow Families Coalition and community round tables. The team supporting the ongoing Rainbow Families groups has been a tireless collaborative effort of parents/caregivers both LGBTTTQ+ identified and allies, LGBTTTQ+ community members, Centretown Community Health Centre, The Ten Oaks Project, Family Services Ottawa, PTS and Mothercraft Ottawa. Over the years, this group has evolved and changed in response to the needs of the LGBTTTQ+ communities.

At the beginning, in 2004 the structural frame of Rainbow Families appeared as follows:

- Location: Centretown Community Health Centre Early Years Centre and community centre room
- Frequency and Time: Twice per month from 6pm–8pm
- Personnel: The Ten Oaks project provided 1-2 volunteers; PTS provided 1-2 volunteers (when the Ten Oaks project stepped away to focus on programming); Centretown Community Health Centre provided three staff (Two early years' childcare workers for the children's room and one counselor for group co-facilitation); and Family Services Ottawa provided one staff.

Each Rainbow Families evening was divided into 3 sections. At 6 p.m. the families gathered together for a pizza dinner. Following dinner the children aged 0-6 joined the two early years childcare workers in one room, children and youth 6 and up joined the Ten Oaks project or PTS volunteers in an art room and the parent group joined the facilitators in a room adjoining the children aged 0-6 years.



Rainbow Families

<http://web.archive.org/web/20041206105512/http://www.tenoaksproject.org/programs.htm>

Rainbow Families Schedule

<http://web.archive.org/web/20050212034625/http://tenoaksproject.org/rfschedule.htm>





Research on Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Trans/Two-Spirit/Queer Families: A Summary Report (2005)

Introduction

In the fall of 2003 Family Services à la famille Ottawa (FSO) began to outreach to gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, and queer (GLBTTQ) families. FSO held focus groups at Centretown Community Health Centre, Minwaashin Lodge, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre, Ontario Early Years Centre West and Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre.

The participants were asked four questions: what does family mean to you; what challenges/barriers would you identify specific to being a GLBTTQ family; what are the strengths of being a GLBTTQ family; and what are the needs of GLBTTQ families with regard to human services and support. We learned from these focus groups that one of the main obstacles families are facing is systemic homophobia and transphobia within the school system. They shared their experiences of being treated unfairly and discriminated against within the school system, such as a child being denied enrollment and being advised to 'try another school'. In other instances parent(s) were accepted into the daycare or school setting but were singled out as 'special' cases.

There were also concerns expressed regarding credibility or legitimacy as being socially accepted as a 'real' family. It took one family three years to obtain their child's birth certificate because there is no form for same-sex parents therefore families must fight to have their status acknowledged. One mother expressed frustration with the oft asked question: "But who is the *real* mother?" The mainstream image of the traditional family, the nuclear family, also creates problems for GLBTTQ families. A few families experienced a state of 'limbo', not being accepted by the mainstream community as a family and also being "dropped" by their gay and lesbian friends when they had a child. These experiences illustrate the unique position gender and sexual minority families are in, sometimes finding no place for themselves in any community.

A part of the process of learning to support GLBTTQ families was to create the Rainbow Family Coalition (RFC). The objectives of the RFC are to respond to the needs and draw upon the strengths of GLBTTQ families; to outreach to isolated GLBTTQ families; and, to ensure that GLBTTQ families receive family life education and parent support. FSFO received funding from the United Way to expand upon and support the RFC. The coalition is a working group of families and service providers with the task of identifying the needs and strengths of GLBTTQ families in our community. A part of identifying these needs



includes the examination of current research, reports and studies on GLBTTQ families. Through the process of researching for this summary report it has become evident that FSFO is on the cutting edge of services for GLBTTQ families. There is little Canadian research thus far on same-sex families and the existing research focuses on the examining of the suitability of parents that are GLBTTQ. Fortunately, all studies have concluded that there are imperceptible differences between heterosexual parents and their same-sex counterparts.

Family Services à la famille Ottawa is committed to breaking new ground in the creation and provision of service to gender and sexual minority families. FSO will continue to contribute to the development of community by bridging the gaps in services and the creation of safe/accessible services for our GLBTTQ families. The following report is based on research in Canada, U.S.A., and United Kingdom.

Summary Report

The research on gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, and queer households in Canada is inadequate. The focus of most research has been on health, child custody, the ability of GLBTQ's to parent, the impacts of allowing same-sex couples to marry and the economic impacts of homophobia. Trans families are absent all together, in the research.

The research that has been done is rapidly refuting the myths surrounding same-sex families: "Children who live with gay or lesbian parents may be either adopted or the biological offspring of one parent. They have no more socio-emotional problems and are no more likely to be homosexual than children raised by heterosexuals."³ According to Patterson's study, "the evidence to date suggests that home environments provided by gay and lesbian parents are as likely as those provided by heterosexual parents to support and enable children's psycho-social growth".⁴

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) issued a press release in 2003 announcing its stand on gay and lesbian parents and denounces the misconception that gays and lesbians make bad parents, "There is no basis in the scientific literature for this perception."⁵ The press release makes two salient points with regards to homophobia:

1. The stress impacting gay and lesbian parents is a direct "result of the public's beliefs and perceptions about their fitness to parent and obstacles created by social

³ Schwartz, Wendy, "Family Diversity in Urban Schools", ERIC/CUE Digest, Number 148, 1999

⁴ Patterson, Charlotte J., Lesbian and Gay Parenting, Summary of Research Findings
<http://www.apa.org/pi/parent.html>, p.8

⁵ Canadian Psychological Association, <http://www.cpa.ca/documents/GayParenting-CPA.pdf>



systems (such as the courts) than it is the result of any deficiencies in their actual fitness to parent.”⁶

2. Psycho-social research shows that there are no differences in the “psycho-social development, gender identity or sexual orientation between the children of gay or lesbian parents and the children of heterosexual parents.”⁷

A literature review completed by the American Psychological Association, mirrors these statements made by the CPA.⁸ “Beliefs that gay and lesbian adults are not fit parents likewise have no empirical foundation.”⁹

The lack of research and information on GLBTTQ families point to the reality that it has not been until recently that our heterosexist society even began to consider the existence of GLBTTQ families. According to the Canadian Census, “a total of 34,200 same-sex common-law couples were counted in Canada in 2001, representing 0.5% of all couples.”¹⁰ The census results indicate a beginning in the coming out process of Canadian same-sex families. There need to be accessible, safe, supportive and educated service providers and agencies available to these families as they come out of the social closet to be counted.

Same-Sex Families - Homophobia and Heterosexism

It is important to clarify from the outset the definitions of the two terms in question:

A) Homophobia: Any belief system that supports negative myths and stereotypes about homosexual people, or any of the varieties of negative attitudes that arise from fear or dislike of homosexuality. The irrational fear of, or aversion to, homosexuals and homosexuality. People who are homophobic react to homosexuals as enemies to be feared, hated and actively repressed.¹¹

B) Heterosexism: Has referred to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of non-heterosexual people.¹²

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ <http://www.apa.org/pi/parent.html>.

⁹ Cramer, 1986; Falk, 1989; Gibbs, 1988; Patterson, 1996; in Patterson p.3

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, “Profile of Canadian Families and households: Diversification continues,” 2001 Census Analysis Series, 2001

¹¹ Banks, Christopher, Literature Review: The Cost of Homophobia in Canada.
http://www.glhs.ca/docs/Human_Impact_of_Homophobia.pdf, p.13

¹² http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/prej_defn.html



What the Research Says

The research supported our families' feedback at the focus groups. For example, the experience of being refused access to schools is not uncommon. When admitted into programs children experienced, "biased attitudes expressed to children when they speak about their families" and a "demonstrated lack of understanding of the unique issues that children and LGBT families face on a day-to-day basis even when biased attitudes are not expressed or may not exist."¹³

The issues that are unique to GLBTTQ families range from experiencing being isolated from both the mainstream and GLBTTQ community, to not being legally recognized as a family and therefore vulnerable in family life situations such as separation, child custody, illness, or death of a spouse.¹⁴ The biased attitudes are couched in homophobic and heterosexual views on what constitutes a family. Common misconceptions about GLBTTQ families are that people who are GLBTTQ are mentally ill and not fit to be parents; that GLBTTQ individuals are not capable of the strong emotional feelings required to care for others; and, that it is harmful to children to be raised by same-sex parents.¹⁵ Though these beliefs still permeate much of the discussion regarding GLBTTQ families we need only look to the research that has been done and know that these attitudes are not based on fact.¹⁶ The cumulative impacts of living under the constant stress of living in a homophobic society have been linked to the "increase in mental health problems within the gay community."¹⁷ The potential impacts on mental health from living in a heterosexual society range from depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicide and addictions.¹⁸

According to *The Cost of Homophobia: Literature Review on the Human Impact of Homophobia in Canada* the negative costs of homophobia result because of "the chronic stress and coping with social stigmatization and societal hatred."¹⁹ More specifically, there is a major lack of resources and support for GLBTTQ individuals, assistance such as family life education and support, individual and systemic advocacy, support groups for children in GLBTTQ families, accessible counselling services and mental health crisis services.²⁰ As one focus group participant put it, "I actually began to question my ability to be a parent because of the negative reactions I received from my family, my doctor and even some of my friends." This statement illustrates the unique issues facing GLBTTQ parents such as,

¹³ http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/ocof/ofoc_cover.html

¹⁴ Wald, Micheal S., Same-Sex Couples: Marriage, Families, and Children. p.20

¹⁵ Ibid., p.3

¹⁶ Cramer, Falk, Gibbs, Patterson

¹⁷ <http://www.365gay.com/newscon04/12/120104discrimHealth.htm>

¹⁸ Health Education Authority, World Mental Health Day, Sexual Identity. (1998)

¹⁹ Banks, p.15

²⁰ Ibid., p.15



confidence in parenting, questioning decision-making, needing support with reproductive alternatives and rights, and the potential to question parenting styles.

Homophobia impacts the family systemically not only through the educational systems but also through our legal system and directly impacts the child(ren) who, “may suffer from the emotional consequences of a bitter legal custody battle that denigrated their gay parent, or be victimized by homophobic peer ridicule.”²¹ Another study, *Reactions to Child Custody Decisions Involving Homosexual and Heterosexual Parents*, illustrates the need for systemic advocacy particularly within the judicial system. The results of this study indicated “there was less support for a homosexual than a heterosexual parent.”²²

The study went on further to specify “that high levels of discrimination including physical attacks and bullying could be linked to high levels of mental disorder.”²³ In another study conducted by the University of London it was stressed that “the impact of homophobic bullying can extend to pupils other than those who feel attracted to others of the same sex. Children and young people with lesbian mothers and/or gay fathers can be teased and bullied about the sexual identity of their parents.”²⁴ The children who live in GLBTTQ families need support to learn how to deal with negative attitudes outside of the home. A father in one focus group asked the simple question: “How do you out your family safely?” The general needs identified by the participants in our focus groups included sensitivity training for service providers and educators, services that are safe and accessible to GLBTTQ families, and consciousness raising in the larger community.

The unique impact on a GLBTTQ parent’s ability to parent is the prevalence of homophobic attitudes that result in active discrimination and isolation. According to the 2001 “How Well Are We Doing?” survey of the GLBTTQ population of Ottawa, 71% of those surveyed indicated support with family relationships, child custody and partner relationships are areas of support urgently needed.²⁵ Half of the respondents indicated a need for the development of GLBTTQ specific programming.²⁶ 25% of respondents reported poor or negative treatment when accessing childcare services.²⁷ Other unmet needs or support indicated in the study were: violence in a relationship 75%,

²¹ Schwartz

²² *Reactions to Child Custody Decisions Involving Homosexual and Heterosexual Parents*.
http://www.cpa.ca/cjbsnew/1995/April/abs_fraser.htm

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Warwick, Chase, & Aggleton, *Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: A Review and Implications for Action*. p.11

²⁵ *How Well Are We Doing?* <http://www.pinktriangle.org/wellness/report.pdf>, p.62

²⁶ Ibid., p.62

²⁷ Ibid., p.36



pregnancy/adoption 50%, parenting and child rearing 43% and loneliness/isolation 57%.²⁸

It is evident there is a real need for accessible family life services and advocacy for the GLBTTQ community. It is critical to the health and well-being of this community and society in general to be able to have access to services that will provide workshops on stress management, advocacy training, supporting your child(ren), dealing with members of extended family, how to approach daycare providers and educators, legal rights as a family, parenting through barriers, creating a place for yourself in the community, advocating for systemic change, and creation of peer support groups.

In the GLBTTQ community, and among other marginalized groups, the phrase 'family of choice' has become commonly used when referring to the families we create as opposed to our biological families.²⁹ Some of the families from the focus groups referred to families of choice. Many GLBTTQ families cannot or will not be fit into the traditional nuclear model of families. This notion of choosing our family based on those who love us and those we love may be a healthy option to choose not only for same-sex families but any family in need of a supportive and loving community.

Trans: Families and Transphobia

Trans is an umbrella term intended to include people whose gender identity, their internal knowledge of being either male or female, does not match their physical/anatomical sex. Some describe being Trans as being born into a wrong body.³⁰ For example, someone born into a female body may experience themselves as male; or someone may experience themselves neither completely male and nor completely female; or someone may experience a stronger sense of a certain gender at different moments; or someone experiences no fixed gender. Clearly, gender identity and gender expression do not always correspond to biological sex.

Trans people who have transitioned or are in the process of transitioning from one gender to another often prefer not to be included under the umbrella definition. People who have completed a transition are either male or female and should be referred to as

²⁸ Ibid., p.21

²⁹ Bravewoman, Lynn and Nancy E. Rose, "Family Webs: A Study of the Extended Families in the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Community," *Feminist Economics*, 4(2), 1998, p.107-109

³⁰ Canadian Teachers Federation and Elementary Teachers Federation, *Seeing the Rainbow*, 2nd ed. (2003), www.ctf-fce.ca



such.³¹ As with other terms, it is important to determine how an individual or community chooses to self-identify, for example, transgender, transexual, intersex, androgyne or genderqueer.

Gender identity is a different issue than sexual orientation or sexual identity. Sexual orientation refers to sexual desires and attractions to others while gender identity refers to an internal knowledge of our gendered sense of self, separate from attraction. Trans people can be gay, lesbian, straight or bisexual yet others may see them as same-sex oriented because others cannot see or believe their sexual identity. For example, a person whose anatomy is male and whose gender identity is female, and whose sexual identity is heterosexual will be perceived as gay by others.³²

Transphobia is the hatred for, fear of, or discomfort with, Trans (gender) people and their perceived lack of conformity with accepted and rigid gender definitions and roles. It is based in negative stereotypes and misconceptions that are then used to justify and support hatred, discrimination, harassment and violence. There is a close relationship between heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia because much of the harassment and violence perpetrated is related to gender roles, the upholding of gender roles and stereotypes, including the rules of desire and attraction, and the adherence to the rules of gender presentation.³³ Transphobia is present in the gay and lesbian community as well, underlining the fact that genderism, the belief that there are only two genders and that identity is based in biology, is about identity and not orientation.

Trans people make up a gender minority in society, from .1 to 3.0 % of the population, and Trans parents and their children are minorities as families experiencing genderism.³⁴ The gender blind spot is apparent as we scanned the research and found no Canadian sources, to this point, on the issues for Trans headed families and their children, and little international research. The challenge will be to understand the various issues, strengths and barriers for Trans couples, their children. Research will be necessary.

Perhaps the most common situation for Trans couples is one where an opposite sex couple has children then the biological male partner comes out and transitions to female. Historically the transitioning partner would need to leave their relationship, their children and divorce with little chance of any access to her children, prior to any steps toward transition. Today, we see such couples and parents maintaining their intimate

³¹ FSA Toronto and Sherbourne Health Centre. LGBT Parenting Network, Transexual/Transgender Parenting. <http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/dks/broch-transsex.html>

³² Cope, A. and J Darke, Trans Accessibility Project: Overview of Transgender Issues, Kingston, Ontario: Human Rights Office. <http://www.queensu.ca/humanrights/tap/8resources.html>

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Golberg, J. and M. Lindenverg, ed., Transforming Community, Transcend Transgender Support and Education Society. <http://www.islandnet.com/transcend>



relationships. They present with specific issues around their relationship to each other, socially, emotionally and sexually; their relationship to their children explaining and supporting them through changes; and within their community with concerns centering on discrimination for their children and their family.

There are as many diverse Trans parents and families as there are diverse families in the broader community. For example, a lesbian couple may have one partner transition creating an apparent straight couple. The same would be true for a gay male couple. Straight couples where the biological female transitions to male is less common, and when it occurs the couple is less likely to remain intact. These examples present possible family compositions where either or both parents are Trans, where the couple may be straight or lesbian/gay, where orientation may change during or after transition, married, where the couple is common-law, separated, divorced and blended in step-families; and the possibilities are not limited by these examples when we are considering gender fluidity and family.

In Trans families children may be present from previous relationships, birth, adoption and supported reproduction, pre and post transition. Children, couples, and individuals will need support to deal with their concerns and these concerns may include the impact of transitioning on their relationships as well as the impact of genderism and transphobia on their families. Research is needed to give voice to Trans families, to identify parents and children's needs, issues and strengths; to identify and eliminate discrimination; and to develop supportive communities in which Trans parents and their families live and contribute. Trans parents like all parents, love and want what is best for their children. They will struggle with the same parenting and couple issues all parents struggle with. Trans families need to be supported, included and celebrated, along with all families.

Recommendations for Future Research

The Ottawa based survey "How Well Are We Doing?" specifies these areas for further study, "low-income individuals, seniors, isolated members of community, low education, and those who identify as bisexual."³⁵ In the APA literature review, Patterson states that there is a need for "...research on diversity among families with gay and lesbian parents and on the potential effects of such diversity on children [as this research] is only beginning."³⁶ Patterson acknowledges the limitations of current research due to the fact

³⁵ <http://www.pinktriangle.org/wellness/report.pdf>

³⁶ Patterson, p.8



that it is, “still very new and relatively scarce.”³⁷ Just like any family or group there are differences among same-sex families based on culture, religion, ethnic background and financial security. If we could get researchers’ focus to shift onto issues like diversity, as suggested by Patterson, we could begin to work on developing most promising practices with all GLBTTQ families.³⁸ The Vanier Institute of the Family supports this need for more diverse research, “...there is practically no literature including the important variables of class, religion, and ethnicity.”³⁹ There is more research available on lesbian mothers and their children than there is on gay dads and children.⁴⁰ Overall Patterson submits that researchers need to conduct, “longitudinal studies that follow lesbian and gay families over time...”⁴¹

The COLAGE website for children of GLBTTQ families also indicates the need for specific studies, such as, longitudinal studies that include a large random sample of kids, research on kids with gay dads or Trans, transexual, or bisexual parent(s).⁴² The overall recommendation made by researchers is that, “...far more research– and far more sophisticated research– is required on all aspects of the lives of same-sex parents and their children.”⁴³ We would strongly recommend the need to include research on all aspects of the lives of Trans parents and their children.

Conclusion

The work of developing programs and services specific to the unique needs of GLBTTQ families has just begun in Ottawa with drop-in programs for families at the Ontario Early Years Centre Ottawa West; the GLBTTQ summer camp with the Ten Oaks Project; the Rainbow Families groups offered by Centretown Community Health Centre and Family Services Ottawa; the SAGE support program for lesbian seniors at Centretown Community Health Centre. There are no services for Trans parents, their partners and children.

In larger cities like Toronto programs are more developed such as the David Kelley Services with Family Services Toronto, which is an entire department of services specifically for GLBTTQ families. The services offered range from support groups for same-

³⁷ Ibid., p.8

³⁸ Ibid., p.8

³⁹ Ambert, Anne-Marie, “Same-Sex Couples and Same-Sex Parent Families: Relationships, Parenting, and Issues of Marriage,” Contemporary Family Trends. p.16

⁴⁰ Patterson, p.8

⁴¹ Ibid., p.8

⁴² Ibid., p.8

⁴³ COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere), <http://www.colage.org/research/index.html>



sex/trans parents to be; legal information on same-sex/trans family rights; Queer Parenting Exchange (a monthly social gathering of same-sex parents or those considering parenthood); counselling services, therapeutic groups for survivors of abuse; coming-out to your family, dealing with depression, and communication workshops; self-esteem workshops; workshops on artificial insemination and how to choose a sperm donor; and a monthly newsletter of current events/information and education; trans specific support and services.

The Rainbow Family Coalition has begun the work of community collaboration and community building which will result in the design and delivery of services that are safe and accessible to all families within Ottawa and surrounding areas. The journey towards true inclusivity of service for GLBTTQ families has only just begun. Through the collaboration of researchers, service providers, GLBTTQ families and local communities we can come together as the diverse families that we are and celebrate the diversity of family.

Research Report

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/3-Research-Report.pdf>





Creating Your Own Parent Support Group

Through the guidance and input from parents attending the group Rainbow Families experienced continued growth. By 2007, there was an articulated desire by the families for the support groups to shift into more social, art and play activities where the whole family was able to participate together. At the same time, the Rainbow Families groups continued to meet once per month as the group was meeting the needs of some LGBTTTQ+ families, particularly those new to the LGBTTTQ+ community and LGBTTTQ+ families with children aged 0-6. The facilitators acknowledged and worked towards creating other opportunities for the families to gather in a more informal and social capacity.

The Rainbow Families group ran from approximately 2004 – 2011. By 2010 the number of families attending had decreased. Family Services Ottawa and Centretown Community Health Centre hosted a Rainbow Families focus group. The purpose was to invite the families to share their needs and wants in relation to the group and to hear from the families about the direction they would like Rainbow Families to move towards. Below are the notes from the focus group.

A Guide to Creating Your Own Parent Support Group

http://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/GLBTTQ-Support-Group_revised_-sept082.pdf





Rainbow Families Focus Group

On November 9, 2010 the Rainbow Families parents participated in a facilitated discussion about the group to date, including what is working well and where there is room for changes. The following is a summary of the discussion.

At the end of the summary, there are some proposed ideas for moving forward with the Rainbow Families Group.

What are your needs from this group?

- Getting feedback/resources from other parents, know what it feels like to be shunned by other parents;
- Get support/resources and provide support;
- Meeting parents with similar experiences;
- A chance to be in a Queer space;
- Interesting dialogue;
- Stronger facilitation;
- Set topics;
- Make connections.

What are your children's needs from this group?

- Kids love activities with programmers-great activities -really important for them;
- Importance for kids to connect with other kids from Queer families so they can get a sense of community;
- Safe space -explore their own gender identity and it be safe doing that in this space;
- Good for them to see other role models-they see a lot of the younger workers in the community, great connection for the kids;
- Everyone there is involved more broadly in the community so it's a great bond.

What has changed in the group? Why might people no longer be attending?

- Change in responsibilities, time, and needs of families change;
- Group has not changed much and needs to evolve to meet changing demographic/needs;
- As group got bigger, harder to be heard so don't get a lot out of it



- Over time disconnect between families who had adopted kids vs. those that had bio kids;
- Topics getting repetitive;
- Not moving along quickly enough, long check-ins etc...;
- Need more structure from facilitators.

What would you like to ask of each other?

- Candid, open, honest, non-judgmental, respectful atmosphere, don't overuse your time;
- In an ideal world there could be more groups, so we have to ask parents to be as flexible as possible in meeting as many needs as possible;
- This group has been open to others peoples experiences which is good;
- Another link to connect people up-face time;
- It doesn't seem to pick up if parents take it on-issue with facilitators taking on coordination, staff time etc. (can facilitators take on a role?);
- Frustrated and fear around the group stopping glad we are actually looking to refocus it;
- Don't want to see it disappear as all the Queer groups do.

What suggestions do you have for the group?

- Keep things moving topic wise;
- Needs more content, depth, meat, sharing, longer group;
- Check in if someone wants to talk about something;
- Can the kids just eat and parents head straight into the group?;
- What about mix of social and structure? (suggestion);
- A couple of times a year social events-social events are great-have them tied to RF date and time as much as possible.;
- Mentoring program?-linking program (add: for kids-collage?).
- Is it possible to have younger kids involved more often in the activities?;
- Tighter ship in terms of getting moving-more direction-stronger facilitation;
- Having the social time at the beginning is hard as there is not a lot to talk about-do it at the end;
- Skip check in;
- Noted a decrease in number of men-need to address.



Proposals for moving forward:

1. Continue skipping check-ins
2. Stronger facilitation i.e. keep topic on track.
3. Set Topics:
 - Parents can give their own ideas and return to facilitators.
 - We will also ask people to fill in some topic ideas
 - These will be amalgamated and a schedule will be sent out
 - Each month, there will be a reminder about the topic.
 - We will still check in on any issues that have come up, and then jump right into topic.
4. Start group early: have programmers help with pizza and have parent group start at 6:10.
 - Social time will be moved to the end of the meeting.
 - For those that want to continue the topic they can.
5. Move the kids programming group next door to smaller age group so that younger kids can take part in the activities if they wish and are able.
6. Move the parent group to the larger room where the older kids usually meet.
7. Family Events: Continue with Winter Celebration and June picnic during the regular time.
 - Organize family day event
 - Coordinate a few other offsite Rainbow Families activities (possibilities include: climbing gym, Winterlude, Saunder's Farm, movie afternoon etc.)

These suggestions and shift in needs were valuable to know in order to move forward with the Rainbow Families group. In the short term, there was renewed interest in the group and the number of families participating increased. Unfortunately attendance began to decrease after a few months and the difficult decision was made by Centretown Community Health Centre and Family Services Ottawa to end the Rainbow Families group in March 2011.

Rainbow Families Focus Group

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/7-Rainbow-Families-focus-group.pdf>



Centretown Community
Health Centre
Centre de santé
communautaire du Centre-ville



March 21, 2011

Dear Rainbow Family Member:

As many of you will remember, in November, we invited parents to a meeting to share their needs and wants in relation to the Rainbow Families Group sponsored by Centretown CHC and Family Services Ottawa (FSO). At that time, we were concerned about declining attendance over the past two years. We had an excellent turnout in November and received good feedback about the group.

The Rainbow Families Group began 8 years ago, at a time when the number of LGBT parents and children in the LGBT community was growing. There was no other group of its kind, LGBT parents identified a need for support and connection with other LGBT parents, and we think this has happened. All groups have their time and place and the Rainbow Family Group certainly filled an important gap.

At the January Rainbow Families Group, we shared the discussion summary and plans for going ahead. CCHC and FSO agreed to continue offering the group in the hopes of increased participation.

However, that has not proved to be the case. Following the November meeting, the number of families attending has been quite small. We cancelled the March meeting because there was only one family registered.

We have therefore made the difficult decision to end the Rainbow Families Group; effective April 2011, the group will no longer be offered.



The Around the Rainbow program at Family Services Ottawa will continue to provide support and events for LGBT families. For more information, please contact Marnie Potter (mpotter@familyservicesottawa.org)

Thank you and your family for participating in the Rainbow Families Group. We also want to recognize Marnie and Andrea for their dedicated support to the group. Centretown CHC and the Family Services Ottawa have been very pleased to be a partner in this program. We wish you and your family all the best and look forward to connecting with you in other ways in the years to come.

Yours truly,

Cathy Collett
Director, Mental Health and Addictions
Centretown CHC

Laurie Rektor
Director, Community Programs
Family Services Ottawa

Rainbow Families Closing Note

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/8-Rainbow-Families-Closing-Note.pdf>



Special Events

While the Rainbow Families group had reached an end, in response to the changing needs of the community, ATR was committed to providing events and opportunities for LGBTTTQ+ families to spend time together. In 2011, ATR was already discussing and exploring a variety of family events outside of the Rainbow Families structure.

An example of one of these events was collaboration between Around the Rainbow and the AIDS Committee of Ottawa in celebrating LGBTTTQ+ families on Family Day. The event was an indoor mid-winter picnic with arts and crafts. The event was held at the AIDS Committee of Ottawa Office and was a wonderful success. It was attended by a number of families, including new families, who had not previously participated in the Rainbow Families group. The entire day was full of vibrant energy with families spending time and creating together. Around the Rainbow was on its way to developing new programming for LGBTTTQ+ family events.

Family Day Event

During the year of 2011 ATR experienced a decrease in funding, and therefore in staff numbers. The program's service delivery was reduced to responding to requests for education, resources and training. Time and resources to support family events were limited. Due to the ongoing demand for training and education and minimal staffing ATR was not able to meet the needs of creating a new Rainbow Families program or provide ongoing social and art events for the LGBTTTQ+ families.

By January 2012, Around the Rainbow was able to revisit the possibility of establishing a form of Rainbow Families. The ATR staff team felt before starting the program again that they wanted to rekindle the conversation with LGBTTTQ+ families and community to make sure that the programming created, time and energy dedicated, would meet the current needs of the families. The decision to combine a fun family day event with surveying the needs of the families was a way to demonstrate the commitment to ongoing social and play activities for the whole family as well as prioritizing the family's voice and input into program development. Although the LGBTTTQ+ communities have been extensively surveyed over the years Around the Rainbow believes that it is important for service providers to check in and create opportunities for feedback and to incorporate the feedback directly into program development.



The event was held at a local café, that provide donated the space for the afternoon and ATR purchased coffee, tea, snacks from the café. Promotion for the event was distributed by email, Facebook, posters and word of mouth. The ability to use social media and broadened the outreach and communication of the event. For the afternoon event, each café table had different art and craft materials for the families to gather around and rotate throughout the café. While the families were at the tables ATR staff met with the families and asked about what types of activities or groups they would like ATR to host. The feedback from the families was to have consistent social family fun events held in a community location with creative play, fun activities, socializing for parents and children as well as food. The families also shared that it is important for there to be recognition of family diversity within the LGBTTTQ+ family make up such as families of colour, poly families, single parent families, trans parents and the inclusion of families with gender creative and trans children. The importance of having free events where families are not limited to attend based on financial restrictions was consistently raised.

By the fall of 2012, the ATR program was regaining stability and staff was committed to hosting family and community art events based on the feedback from early 2012 surveys. The feedback was an excellent guide for staff to use when planning and organizing. ATR was not the only Ottawa program offering creative events for LGBTTTQ+ families in the fall of 2012. Ottawa was experiencing an increase in services available for LGBTTTQ+ families and parents. ATR collaborated with event organizers and community organizations with the goal of partnering on family programming.

Below is a listing of the events from 2012 to 2014. This list provides a brief overview of the development stages and growth of Rainbow Families in collaboration with community partners. It also indicates, indirectly, how the needs of LGBTTTQ+ families continued to evolve:

Rainbow Snowflake Sparkle

- When: December 2012
Host: Around the Rainbow
Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave
<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/10-Rainbow-Snowflake-Sparkle.pdf>



LGBTQ+ Family and Community Children's Book Readings

- When: February 2013
Host: Around the Rainbow, the Ten Oaks Project, and the Aids Committee of Ottawa
Where: Ottawa Public Library, 120 Metcalfe Street
http://aco-cso.ca/Snowblower/event_familybookevent.html

*Following the success and high attendance levels of the above two events, ATR began hosting an ongoing LGBTQ+ Open Art Studio Day with the goal of establishing an art studio atmosphere for families. The events offered a creative outlet through painting, drawing, mixed media, collaging, crafting, zine making, writing or to just enjoy being in a creative family friendly environment.

LGBTQ+ Families, Youth, Parents, Prospective Parents & Individuals FREE event DROP IN Open Art Studio

- When: March 16, 1pm-5pm and evening potluck 5pm-8pm
Host: Around the Rainbow and Queer & Trans Family Potlucks
Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTQ-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/520502144659530/>

Earth Day! Art Day! Family Event

- When: April 21, 2pm-5pm and evening potluck 5pm-8pm
Host: Around the Rainbow and Queer & Trans Family Potlucks
Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTQ-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/490193534381814/>

*The March 2013 and April 2013 events were again successful with high attendance, participation, engagement and positive community response. For the upcoming programming ATR explored the option of hosting events in City run community centres as a way to move the events back into the community. ATR was able to cover the cost of space rental for the June 2013 event but the cost of renting a venue was too high for the program to sustain on an ongoing basis. ATR was grateful to the City of Ottawa who donated a room for the October 2013 art day but was not able to continue the donation on a regular basis.



LGBTQT+ Parent's and Chosen Family Day Celebration

- When: June 1, 1pm-5pm
Host: Around the Rainbow
Where: Jack Purcell Community Centre, 320 Jack Purcell Lane, Ottawa, ON
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTQT-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/337953662994394/>

LGBTQT+ Around the Rainbow Art Day

- When: October 19, 1pm-3pm
Host: Around the Rainbow
Where: Routhier Community Centre, 172 Guigues, Ottawa, ON
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTQT-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/682726651757750/>

Rainbow Snowflake Sparkle

- When: December 28, 9am-4pm
Host: Around the Rainbow and Queer & Trans Family potlucks
Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTQT-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/417621475006734/>
- When: February 16, 2pm-4pm
Host: Around the Rainbow, the Ten Oaks Project, and AIDS Committee of Ottawa's Snowblower Festival
Where: Arts Court, 2 Daly, Ottawa, ON
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTQT-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/1401263253461976/>

Queer & Trans Family Potluck, Movie and (optional) Pajama Party!

- When: May 3, 4pm-8pm
Host: Around the Rainbow and the Ten Oaks Project
Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1439385306300735/?ref=22>



*In February 2014, as part of reaching out to other services providers and looking for options to expand and enhance the Around the Rainbow program, ATR staff attended an LGBTTTQ+ Family Event in Toronto that was held at the 519 Church Street Family Resource Centre. The Toronto organizers held the event at an early years centre on the Saturday afternoon for art and play completely dedicated to LGBTTTQ+ families. This possibility inspired the ATR staff to send out an email request to all of the early years centres in Ottawa for the donation of free space to LGBTTTQ+ family programming. Around the Rainbow received responses from Mothercraft Ottawa and the Centretown Community Health Centre Early Years program. ATR staff met with both community organizations about the need for a consistent space to host the art and play events in as well as the desire to transfer the events into a community setting. These meetings provided opportunities of information exchange, education, awareness and further understanding about gender creative children and their families and LGBTTTQ+ families. Both Mothercraft Ottawa and Centretown Community Health Centre Early Years program accepted to collaborate with ATR on hosting pilot art & play events at their locations throughout the summer of 2014. Mothercraft Ottawa and Centretown Community Health Centre Early Years program provided:

- one staff person
- drop in early years space
- generous use of the early years supplies such as toys, crafts, books, music, instruments
- promotion in their summer events program schedule
- snacks
- ongoing inclusive and welcoming support from all of the staff team members

Summer Rainbow Families Mothercraft

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/11-Summer-Rainbow-Families-Mothercraft.pdf>

Summer Rainbow Families CCHC

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/12-Summer-Rainbow-Families-CCHC.pdf>



The summer pilot programs were successful and very well attended. Each event saw new families attending, in addition to those already participating in Around the Rainbow family programming. ATR had the staffing capacity to continue with hosting art & play events into the fall 2014 and the program was able to offer two events per month. After reviewing the amount of staff time available and how to expand the programming which would best meet the needs of families ATR and Mothercraft Ottawa Ontario Early Years Centre agreed to co-host Rainbow Families art & play events at Mothercraft Ottawa on the first Saturday of each month from 12pm-4pm and the second Wednesday of each month from 9:30am – 11:30am. This collaboration has become a wonderful strength and contribution to the ATR programming. The Mothercraft staff has participated in Around the Rainbow training and education so that they are better able to serve LGBTTTQ+ families accessing their centre at all times, not just during Around the Rainbow events. This community agency has expanded their capacity and support for LGBTTTQ+ families through their collaboration with ATR.

On December 6, 2014, ATR, in partnership with Mothercraft Ottawa, will be hosting the third annual Rainbow Snowflake Sparkle art & play event. Below is an outline of the event advertised on Facebook and through the Mothercraft Ottawa September to December 2014 program calendar.

- Rainbow Snowflake Sparkle Art & Play event will be held on Saturday December 6 from 12pm-4pm. Located at Mothercraft Ottawa, 475 Evered Ave. The 'snowflake sparkle' will be making an entrance around 2pm for a special theatrical performance.
- Rainbow Families Art & Play Afternoon: For queer & trans parents, caregivers, families, children and youth. For families with gender creative, gender independent and trans children and youth. Join us in art & play activities while connecting with other families. We will have indoor and outdoor activities for all ages.

Please see the link below for full details:

http://www.mothercraft.com/prenatal_parent/Documents/Drop-InSchedule.pdf

Link to Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1500157166914493/>



Programs for Families with Gender Creative, Gender Independent Children

Since 2005, ATR had focused on community development and education to help decrease the isolation, bullying and homophobia experiences of children within LGBTTTQ+ headed families. Over the years the program has experienced a steady increase in phone calls and email requests for information on how to support families with gender creative and trans children and youth. The majority of the requests for services related to gender creative and trans children and youth have been from parents, caregivers, elementary and secondary teachers, principals and early childhood educators. In addition to requests for service, when providing public education trainings focused on LGBTTTQ+ families, the ATR trainers receive numerous questions regarding how to support parents and caregivers of gender creative and trans children and youth.

From both of these sources, one of the main services being asked for was social events for the whole family where gender creative and trans children and youth could meet and connect with one another in a setting that was playful and social therefore meeting the needs of both parents and children.

The main gaps in services were:

- family social events
- parent and caregiver support groups
- local resources for the parents/caregivers and their families
- training and resources for teachers and principals

These needs were echoed by the Gender Diversity Clinic staff team at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the Ottawa Carleton District School Board Inclusive, Safe and Caring Schools Programs team.

In the spring of 2013, the FSO Around the Rainbow and Parenting Programs staff teams met with the CHEO Gender Diversity Clinic staff team. The discussion was about how to collaborate and develop a support group for parents and caregivers with gender creative, gender independent, trans children. Internally at FSO this project was an important collaboration between two program areas – ATR and parenting. This internal partnership was part of the continuing development of FSO as a multi-service agency meeting the needs of LGBTTTQ+ families.

CHEO was providing medical services for families, but had identified a gap in supports for parents and caregivers. They had gathered a list of families who expressed interest in meeting with other parents and caregivers that were also accessing the Gender Diversity Clinic. In the fall of 2013, staff from FSO and CHEO co-hosted two evening focus



groups at FSO for parents of gender creative, gender independent children. The goal of the focus groups was to hear first voice from the parents and caregivers about what ways a new group could best meet their needs. The information gathered from the focus groups would then be directly translated into the creation of the group structure. The focus groups were divided by the age of the child. The first focus group for parents of children aged 12 and under was held on Thursday October 3, 2013. The second focus group for parents of children aged 12 years or older was held on Thursday October 10, 2013. The coordinator of FSO parenting programs took the lead in organizing the focus groups. FSO created an email invite and a basic poster advertising the focus groups. The email and posters were sent out to families who had expressed interest in attending a support group for parents and caregivers through community emails list serves. The OCDSB distributed the email and posters to all of their principals and vice principals. Each focus group was well attended with approximately 12 people per group and those who were not able to attend provided input over email and phone.

Parent Focus Group 12 + years

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/13-Parent-Focus-Group-12-+-years.pdf>

Parent Focus Group under 12 years

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/14-Parent-Focus-Group-under-12-years.pdf>



Focus Group for Parents of gender creative youth (12 years or older)

- Do you have a teenager who is gender creative, gender independent, gender non-conforming or transgender?
- Are you interested in meeting with other parents?
- Would you like to participate in a focus group to discuss the development of a parent support group?

Family Services Ottawa and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario are collaborating to develop a support group for parents of gender creative youth.

We are inviting you to attend a 2 hour focus group to share your thoughts and ideas as to the model of group that would be most helpful for you...the parent.

We would like to hear your suggestions for what a support group would look like, what you need as a parent, what the issues are for you, what would be helpful, what would be unhelpful.

Come and meet with other parents to share your vision at this beginning stage.

When: Thursday October 10, 2013, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Avenue

Cost: free of charge

For information and registration, please contact Beck at 613-725-3601 ext. 105

Get the *parenting edge*!

Parent Focus Group 12 + years
<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/13-Parent-Focus-Group-12-+-years.pdf>



Focus Group for parents of Gender creative children (under 12 years old)

- Do you have a child who is gender creative, gender independent, gender non-conforming or transgender?
- Are you interested in meeting with other parents?
- Would you like to participate in a focus group to discuss the development of a parent support group?

Family Services Ottawa and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario are collaborating to develop a support group for parents of gender creative children.

We are inviting you to attend a 2 hour focus group to share your thoughts and ideas as to the model of group that would be most helpful for you...the parent.

We would like to hear your suggestions for what a support group would look like, what you need as a parent, what the issues are for you, what would be helpful, what would be unhelpful.

Come and meet with other parents to share your vision at this beginning stage.

When: Thursday October 3, 2013, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Avenue

Cost: free of charge

For information and registration, please contact Beck at 613-725-3601 ext. 105

Get the *parenting edge*!

Parent Focus Group under 12 years
<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/14-Parent-Focus-Group-under-12-years.pdf>



Based on the information provided by the parents and caregivers as well as the capacity of what both organizations were able to offer it was decided to create a monthly group for parents and caregivers. Although the focus groups had been divided based on the age of the child(ren), the parents indicated that they would prefer to meet with all parents, regardless of the age of their child(ren).

The group was set to meet on the first Tuesday of every month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm hosted at FSO in one of the group rooms. It was felt that it was important to provide the service in the community, rather than at the hospital. CHEO and FSO dedicated one staff person each to share the roles of co-facilitating the group.

Information about the new group was circulated by email throughout education, early years, community, health and social services email list serves as well as email newsletters. The information was posted on the FSO webpage and through social media as well as in the waiting room of CHEO's gender diversity clinic. Each family who had accessed CHEO's Gender Diversity Clinic was provided a letter with the information about the support group. The support group information was uploaded to Gender Creative Kids Canada online event page and the Rainbow Health Ontario online event page.

Examples of promotion for the March 4 2014 group:

Parent Support Group

<http://gendercreativekids.ca/events/ottawa-parent-support-group/>

The parent and caregiver support group has been a tremendous success and is the only service of its kind in Ottawa. The partnership with FSO and CHEO is a very productive collaboration; both agencies work very well together to meet the needs of parents with gender creative, gender independent children. Attendance at the group is growing and ATR is already considering expanding to more than one group. At this time up to 25 people attend each month.

The parents and caregivers who attended the focus groups and the regular monthly support group have indicated that they would like to have social events, in addition to the monthly group. The social events would provide the children and youth an opportunity to meet each other in a fun and social atmosphere. In response to this, the ATR program scheduled art and play events specifically for gender creative children and their families to be offered in addition to the ongoing art and play events for LGBTTTQ+ parents and caregivers and their families.



The new art and play events were promoted to the parents and caregivers who attended the support groups as well as parents and caregivers who had attended a group or contacted ATR staff or CHEO Gender Diversity Clinic staff by in person meeting, email or phone requesting to be kept up to date about activities. The art and play event promotional materials were uploaded to Gender Creative Kids Canada's online event page and the Rainbow Health Ontario online event page.

Examples of the art and play promotional materials:

Art Studio & Play Evening for Families with Gender Creative & Transgender Children

When: Friday November 22, 5:30pm-8pm

Host: Around the Rainbow

Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/LGBTTQ-Around-the-Rainbow-Family-Services-Ottawa/195322803947632?ref=hl#!/events/543777325706437/>

Art & Play afternoon for gender creative, gender independent and trans children, youth, and teens

When: April 2014

Host: Family Services Ottawa

Where: Family Services Ottawa, 312 Parkdale Ave

The above pilot art and play programs specifically for the families of gender creative and trans children and youth were successful. Unfortunately, at this time the program does not have the resources to continue to host specific art and play programs for these families. However, the current Rainbow Families program welcomes all families to attend. Given the importance of family events specifically for families with gender creative, trans children, ATR is committed to finding the resources to return to hosting art and play programming for these families.



LGBTTQ+ Counselling

In Ottawa, there was a significant gap in counselling services specifically for LGBTTQ+ individuals, partners and families. As the Around the Rainbow program was growing and becoming integrated into the agency the importance of expanding the program to include a wider range of services and programs for LGBTTQ+ communities was identified. FSO provided a number of counselling programs and some staff had some expertise in working with LGBTTQ+ individuals and families, however the agency did not offer counselling services for the community by an LGBTTQ+ identified counsellor. In 2008, FSO was very pleased to learn of a partnership opportunity with the David Kelly Centre at Family Services Toronto. The Counselling Foundation of Canada had provided support to David Kelly to train and mentor LGBTTQ+ individuals, newly graduated from social work to become clinical counsellors. FSO submitted a proposal to the Family Services Toronto expressing a strong interest in being a part of this capacity building opportunity. Internally this application was prepared and submitted jointly from the Community Programs working with the Counselling Programs. The process of working together has contributed in many positive ways to the integration of Around the Rainbow into the agency.

FSO's request to Family Services Toronto was to have a counselling intern work in both program areas of counselling and community development as a way to strengthen the community work being done by the Around the Rainbow program, and to expand into core service areas of the agency, beginning with the counselling program. Family Services Toronto and the funder, The Counselling Foundation of Canada was open to considering the request that the intern work in community and counselling at FSO.

The proposal was successful the two agencies worked together to screen and hire the intern for the two year period of the project. The project required the intern to spend the first year at the David Kelly Centre developing the counselling skills and experience to work with the LGBTTQ+ community. In the second year, the intern returned to Ottawa, began to work in the counselling program at FSO, as the agencies first out, and identified LGBTTQ+ counsellor. Given the success of the project and the importance of providing clinical service to the LGBTTQ+ communities, FSO decided to create a permanent position in the counselling program for LGBTTQ+ service. The support of Family Services Toronto and the Counselling Foundation of Canada made it possible for the Around the Rainbow program to expand to include clinical services. It is important to recognize and highlight the dedication to the position and work which took place in building and stabilizing the LGBTTQ+ counselor position at FSO. The work of the ATR counsellor was rooted in community engagement and clinical counselling.



When the Intern began the position with FSO, they became the Around the Rainbow (ATR) counsellor. This new role was highly important and significant in creating and establishing clinical capacity within the FSO counselling services as well as the broader clinical counselling community in Ottawa. When the counsellor arrived to FSO they were essentially building the position from the ground up within a counselling environment that had not previously focused specifically on supporting and providing LGBTTTQ+ specific clinical counselling services. The Around the Rainbow (ATR) counsellor provides counselling supports, educational training and community based resources to LGBTTTQ+ individuals, partners and families as well as broader social service agencies. Initially, the counsellor's role included community outreach and a leading role in community development initiatives with a commitment to outreach to those who are experiencing marginalization and/or isolation. The ATR counsellor provided ongoing education, awareness and broader understanding to the counselling team about the specific clinical needs, intersections and complexities which the diverse LGBTTTQ+ communities face in terms of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

In a very short period, the demand for service exceeded the capacity to delivery counselling to the LGBTTTQ+ communities. FSO currently receives a consistently high number of requests for counselling, information and referrals. This demand service is a testament of the success of the ATR counsellor and the dedication to community and networking of social services. In 2015, the current job description of the ATR counsellor focuses mostly on providing clinical supports to address the multiple needs of the Ottawa LGBTTTQ+ communities. Below is a brief outline of the over purpose, main function and major responsibilities of the ATR counsellor. (Please see Appendices for the complete position job description)

OVERALL PURPOSE/MAIN FUNCTION

The Around the Rainbow (ATR) counsellor provides services to individuals, couples and their families specifically related to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. The counsellor also provides community outreach and participates in community development initiatives that support the ATR counselling services, with a commitment to outreach to those in the community whom are marginalized and/or isolated. The counselling and program development/community development responsibilities are the equivalent of 95% counselling services and 5% program/community development.



MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Counselling Services: (60 % direct services)

- Provides professional counselling services to individuals, couples and families specifically related to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation using a variety of intervention methodologies based on assessment of client needs and planned counselling goals established with the client;
- Provides referrals to additional resources and collateral collaboration for clients, as required;
- May provide advocacy services on behalf of a counselling client or group of clients;
- May provide and/or co-lead groups.

Program planning

- Works with the Director of Counselling Programs to develop and maintain plans for community outreach in the development of a referral base specifically related to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation counselling services;
- Works with Director of Counselling Programs to develop plans for guidelines and incorporation of best practices in the General Counselling Program for the provision of specifically related to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation counselling services;
- Works with Director of Counselling to assess current needs, gaps, and barriers to accessing counselling and services within LGBTTTQ+ communities;
- Works in collaboration with ATR community worker for program development, training, and identification of service needs in the community.

Consultation/Education/Training Services

- May provide consultation to other professionals regarding topics relevant to issues addressed in ATR programming and counselling services;
- May provide public education and/or training;
- May represent the program/agency on community planning and advocacy committees.



Support Work

- Attends counselling program team meetings;
- Attends FSO staff meetings and professional development meetings;
- Attends other meetings as required (e.g., clinical capacity group meetings and trans mentorship calls);
- Participates in counselling supervisory sessions and peer consultation sessions.

Administration and agency duties

- Maintains accurate files, case records and statistical data as required by the agency and funders;
- Prepares correspondence as required;
- Prepares project reports, under direction of the program director;
- Completes administration duties as required for agency and personnel records;
- May participate in internal agency committees and/or Board committees including union/management committees;
- Other duties as required.



RESEARCH

In addition to the value that Around the Rainbow places on focus groups and first voice feedback from LGBTTTQ+ families, the program recognizes the importance of research to support program and service development. Over the years of the program, Around the Rainbow has been fortunate to work with university students and university programs to commission relevant research for the program.

In partnership with the Carleton University MSW social work program ATR has conducted research to enhance the knowledge base and resources we can offer in our education and training programs and the expansion and improvement of existing programs and services. The focus of each research paper has addressed and provided awareness of strengths, challenges and gaps in service experienced by LGBTTTQ+ families related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. These papers have also increased the knowledge in the broader Ottawa community.

Below is a brief summary excerpt taken from the introduction of the respective reports:

Around the Rainbow—Rainbow Families Research Project

There is wide agreement within the literature that LGBTTTQ families continue to face discrimination and barriers in accessing community health and social services and that many of these services fail to adequately address the particular needs of these families. The findings from this research project confirm that institutional discrimination, such as homophobia within community health and social services persist. Participants expressed that there is little understanding of the different needs of LGBTTTQ children and parents among service agencies. Survey respondents identified a wide range of issues and concerns which will be useful for FSFO and other service providers as they continue to develop informed, inclusive and effective programs and supports for LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region.



ABSTRACT

The Rainbow Families Research Project conducted a demographic profile and needs assessment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-Spirit and Queer (LGBTQT) families in the Ottawa region. LGBTQT family members and service providers were invited to complete an anonymous online survey to provide feedback on a variety of issues related to the provision of social services.

The study found that LGBTQT families continue to face pervasive discrimination from institutions and social service agencies. Based on the results of our study, it is recommended that the following needs be addressed:

1. Specialized training for service providers in anti-oppressive practice with LGBTQT families;
2. Further community development initiatives and outreach for LGBTQT families;
3. The establishment of more inclusive and accepting services for trans people;
4. The development of more specialized parenting courses, youth groups, counselling services and recreational events;
5. Further research to determine the most effective training strategies to increase service provider knowledge, and reduce heterosexism and discrimination within Ottawa's institutions and social service agencies. Further research on the experiences of LGBTQT family members who identify as trans, two-spirit, members of a visible minority and people whose first language is other than English, is also suggested.

INTRODUCTION

The Rainbow Family Research Project was initiated by Family Services à la Famille Ottawa (FSO) through the Around the Rainbow Project, and was carried out by a small team of graduate social work students and staff of FSFO. The purpose of this project is to identify the unmet needs of children and youth of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-Spirited, Queer parents (LGBTQT), and of LGBTQT families as a whole. FSFO and the Around the Rainbow Project will use this research to expand upon and improve existing programs and services to better meet the needs of LGBTQT families in the Ottawa region.

There is wide agreement within the literature that LGBTQT families continue to face discrimination and barriers in accessing community health and social services and that many of these services fail to adequately address the particular needs of these families.



The findings from this research project confirm that institutional discrimination, such as homophobia within community health and social services persist. Participants expressed that there is little understanding of the different needs of LGBTTTQ children and parents among service agencies. Survey respondents identified a wide range of issues and concerns which will be useful for FSO and other service providers as they continue to develop informed, inclusive and effective programs and supports for LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region.

This report will begin with a literature review examining issues affecting many LGBTTTQ children and families, such as homophobia and discrimination; diversity within LGBTTTQ families; and the need to develop inclusive and anti-oppressive services and programs within communities. We will continue with an explanation of the Rainbow Families Research Project methodology, followed by an analysis of our findings. Finally, we will make concluding remarks and offer a number of recommendations stemming from our findings.

The research team is grateful to all of the participants who took the time to complete the online survey. Without your participation this report would not have been possible. It is our hope that LGBTTTQ families in Ottawa feel that they have been listened to and that their concerns, suggestions and views are reflected in the findings of this report.

Definition of Terms

Bisexual: A man or woman who can be attracted to or have a romantic/sexual relationship with members of either sex. (Janmohamed, 2006, p.4)

Heterosexism: Refers to “societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of non-heterosexual people.” (University of California website)

Homophobia: Any belief system that supports negative myths and stereotypes about homosexual people, or any of the varieties of negative attitudes that arise from fear or dislike of homosexuality. An irrational fear or aversion to homosexuals and homosexuality. People who are homophobic react to homosexuals as enemies to be feared, hated and actively repressed. (Banks, 2003 in FSFO Summary Report, 2005, p.5)

Queer: Historically, this has been a derogatory term used to describe LGBTQ people. In the 1980’s, within the LGBTQ civil rights struggle, a movement emerged to reclaim the word ‘queer’ and use it in a positive way. The term queer is not consistently used by LGBTQ people and should not be used casually to describe LGBTQ families. (Janmohamed, 2006, p.5)

Sexual Orientation: Describes our emotional, psychological and sexual relationship to others. Sexual orientation is different from sexual behaviour because it refers to feelings and self concept and individuals may not express their sexual behaviour. (Janmohamed, 2006, p.5)

Transgender: Is an umbrella term intended to include anyone whose gender identity or expression falls outside the stereotypically expected behaviours of men and women. (Janmohamed, 2006, p.5)

Transphobia: The hatred for, fear of, or discomfort with, Trans (gender) people and their perceived lack of conformity with accepted gender definitions and roles. It is based in negative stereotypes and misconceptions that are then used to justify and support hatred, discrimination, harassment and violence. (FSO Report, p.9)



LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing body of research and writing on the impact of homophobia and discrimination on LGBTTTQ children and families. At the same time, there is also a general consensus that not enough has been done to understand how these impact different segments within the LGBTTTQ community. A 2001 research report, *How Well are We Doing*, suggests further research and investigation is required to assess the needs and strengths of different groups within the LGBTTTQ community—including individuals with low incomes, low educational levels, seniors, transgender and bisexual individuals, and those isolated from LGBTTTQ networks. (Pink Triangle Services, 2001) This report acknowledges that while headway has been made in Ottawa to better understand and meet the distinct needs of LGBTTTQ families and children, more and better research is required.

There is also agreement among much of the literature for the need to use research to inform advocacy and to build strong LGBTTTQ communities. For example, there is general agreement that more support and advocacy is needed within education, and the judicial and child protection systems to protect LGBTTTQ families from discrimination. (Fraser et al, 1995) There is also wide agreement that LGBTTTQ families continue to face discrimination and barriers in community health and social services more broadly, and that many of these services fail to adequately address the particular issues and needs of LGBTTTQ families. As such, there is a need for more research to better understand and develop sensitive, appropriate and effective programs and supports for LGBTTTQ parents and children. (Dobson, 2005)

1-Homophobia and Discrimination

The literature consistently confirms that the persistent image of the traditional heterosexual family held by mainstream society creates stress, anxiety and isolation for many LGBTTTQ families. Studies have indicated that internalized homophobia and oppression are risk factors for suicide, anxiety, depression, self-harm, and addictions. (Stewart & Twomey, 2008; Meyer, 2007) Prejudice affects the health of LGBTTTQ families and individuals in many ways—including direct discrimination, such as violence, and indirect discrimination in the form of barriers to obtaining sensitive, culturally relevant, high quality health care (Meyer, 2007) and educational opportunities.

Meyer emphasizes the importance of solidarity and community within the LGBTTTQ community, noting that community formation is a sign of resiliency and a protective factor against the stress of discrimination. Indeed, community affiliation and support may help to reduce the impact of prejudice and protect against the harmful effects of stigmatization and



discrimination. For LGBTTTQ people, affiliation with their community has been found to be associated with increased levels of self-esteem, and improved mental health.(Ibid) In contrast, the exclusion of LGBTTTQ students and families from the school community has the effect of denying educational resources to students and leaves LGBTTTQ parents at a disadvantage if they have concerns about their children's education. (Kosciw and Diaz, 2008)

A research participant in a 2005 Family Services á la Famille Ottawa (FSFO) research project asked "How do you 'out' your family safely?" Another participant expressed this fear as "concern regarding credibility or legitimacy of being accepted as a 'real' family". (FSFO, 2005, p.7) LGBTTTQ parents, like all parents, face many challenges in providing for the physical, emotional, social, cultural and educational needs of their children. Yet, because of homophobia they are often ignored as families and find it difficult to access services that support them in their parenting role. In her toolkit for early childhood educators, Zeenat Jonmohamed acknowledges that while the human rights of LGBTTTQ families have been codified in federal and provincial law, the decision for LGBTTTQ individuals to become parents involves dealing with societal barriers that must be overcome. Jonmohamed indicates that "the basic right to exist as a family is a political issue and a lightning rod for controversy" and that it is within this context that health and social services must change to meet the particular needs of LGBTTTQ families. (Ibid, p.3)

A growing body of literature draws attention to the persistence of homophobia within the education system. Much of the literature indicates that while homophobia remains a problem there is evidence that some schools are embracing LGBTTTQ friendly policies and practices. This is evidenced in Bos' finding that "homophobia has a negative impact on the well-being of children who experience it [while] attending schools with LGBTTTQ curricula was found to protect children against the negative influences of homophobia". (2008, p.456) Some of the literature is less optimistic and insists that homophobia and discrimination continue to be pressing problems. FSFO focus group participants explained, "Schools often do not accept us as parents or legitimate families" (FSFO, 2005, p.5) Similarly, Lindsay and colleagues find that "in many hetero-normative school contexts, family members were stigmatized and burdened by secrecy and fear about their family configuration". (2006, p. 15) Callaghan also points to entrenched homophobia in the Catholic secondary school system. (2007) Recognition of such ongoing discrimination in schools makes it imperative to support LGBTTTQ families through further research and parent support networks and advocacy. Kosciw and Diaz note that there is a lack of research that investigates "the family-school relationship, school climate and other school-related experiences for LGBTTTQ parents as well as their children". (2008, p.xiii)



2-Diversity within LGBTTTQ Families

The literature reveals that much more sophisticated research is required to better understand the complex and diverse needs of LGBTTTQ families. The concern about the relative dearth of research, particularly in regards to diversity, was captured in a 1995 US longitudinal study: “... research on diversity among families with gay and lesbian parents and on the effects of such diversity on children is only beginning”. (Patterson, 1995, p. 17) Patterson recognizes that LGBTTTQ families are not homogeneous but come from a multiplicity of religious, ethnic, cultural, social and economic backgrounds. The FSFO study suggests that research on LGBTTTQ families must shift from pathology to issues of diversity in order to assist with the development of promising programs and practice to meet the diverse needs of these families. (2005) This study, like many others, calls for far more refined research into the distinct and diverse needs of the LGBTTTQ families.

Dobson experienced one example of the absence of research and the resultant gaps in programs and services for specific populations within the LGBTTTQ community in finding difficulty in sorting through the sea of gay and lesbian research to find any information pertaining to the health needs of bisexual individuals. (2005) Similarly, the COLAGE website for LGBTTTQ parents identified a “gender blind spot” regarding the needs of transgendered, transsexual and bisexual parents. (FSFO, 2005, p. 10) Cashore and Tuason further note that trans people are “largely invisible within society and academia”. (2009, p. 337) Indeed, transgender students experience higher levels of violence and harassment within the school system than lesbian, gay or bisexual students. (Greytak et al, 2009; National Education Association, 2009) and are less likely to report that they feel a sense of belonging in their school community, compared to non-transgendered students. (Greytak et al, 2009) Diaz and Kosciw found that many visible minority LGBTTTQ students were “commonly harassed in school because of their race”. (2009, p.xi) Visible and ethnic minority students face discrimination in multiple areas—homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism, racism, and often exclusion from both the LGBTTTQ community and ethnic minority communities. (National Education Association, 2009) Similarly, two-spirit individuals may face heterosexism from the Aboriginal community and racism from the LGBTTTQ community. (Fieland et al., 2007)

There are myriad differences across the spectrum of LGBTTTQ families, including who heads the family, their ethnic and class backgrounds, how the family came to be formed, and whether children are adopted, conceived by artificial insemination, or come from previous homosexual or heterosexual relationships. Statistics Canada’s 2006 Census found that women in same-sex couples were more likely to have children—16.3% versus 2.9% for men. However, LGBTTTQ families come from a multiplicity of backgrounds and it is important for research to better capture this diversity in order to



support advocacy and the development of informed and inclusive programs and services.

3-Developing Services and Programs

As indicated above, there is broad agreement within the literature about the need for further research to better understand the diversity of issues and needs of LGBTTTQ families as part of developing effective community programs and services. All members of society should have the right to health and social services that they can trust will understand their lives and meet their needs—for many LGBTTTQ families this is simply not the case.

The literature is clear that social and health service providers need to develop skills in working with the issues and needs of LGBTTTQ families. (Patterson, 1995) Carroll states, “Because of the negative attitudes many health care professionals hold toward LGBTTTQ individuals, many come to avoid contact with health care services until a health crisis is reached”. (1999, p.9) He also argues that these negative attitudes often directly affect the quality of services provided. Indeed, from health care to child care, heterosexist assumptions play out within programs and services. Janmohamad relates an example of this in the story of a child care centre:

ECE staff sometimes engages in a process where children are ‘coupled’ based on cuteness factor. If opposite sex children play together they may be labeled as boyfriend and girlfriend – reinforcing gendered approaches to play and relationships based on heterosexual assumptions. (2006, p. 12)

The Rainbow Families Research Project seeks to address the concerns indicated above - both the gaps in research on diversity, and the barriers endemic for LGBTTTQ families in community programs and services. Through determining the population demographics of LGBTTTQ families in Ottawa, FSFO seeks to develop and expand upon sensitive, safe, accessible and inclusive services meant to address the diversity of needs within the city’s LGBTTTQ community.

METHODOLOGY

The Rainbow Families Research Project aimed to obtain an overall demographic profile of LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region. In addition, we sought to identify the unmet needs of children and youth of LGBTTTQ parents, as well as the service needs of



LGBTQT families as a whole. To meet these goals, our study consisted of the creation and implementation of an online survey, with separate sections of questions targeted to LGBTQT family members and to service providers.

1-Sampling Procedures

The literature consulted consistently recommended that LGBTQT research participants should remain anonymous, and that anonymous surveys be used whenever possible. At the same time, the literature indicated that participants should be made explicitly aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time to avoid feelings of coercion. (Meezan & Martin, 2009) The research team incorporated both of these suggestions into our design of the Rainbow Families Research Project.

Contact with our participants was made solely through our promotion of the survey, as described below. Participants self-selected, and completed the survey at a time and place of their own choosing. Participants remained anonymous throughout the research project. The identities of participants were unknown to researchers during data collection, and will therefore not be revealed in any reports or other presentations of the Rainbow Families Research Project. As such, it is impossible to determine any potential relationship between participants and members of the research team. The identities of participants were also unknown to other participants in the study.

The materials used in promoting the Rainbow Families Research Project survey identified that participants should either be a member of an LGBTQT family, or provide services, in the Ottawa region. A similar disclaimer preceded the beginning of the survey. This disclaimer also informed participants that they could exit the survey at any time.

In order to obtain a large response rate, we circulated a poster and supporting information to a large number of community organizations, groups, centres and resources. We also asked these organizations to post a link to the online survey on their own websites. Given the large number organizations included in this outreach, we were unable to note how many of them did in fact promote the survey. We do know that Around the Rainbow, through FSFO, promoted the survey and posted a link to the survey on its website.

We further advertised the survey using the social networking site Facebook. The Around the Rainbow Project has an existing Facebook account, on which we posted the promotional poster for the survey. The Around the Rainbow account is set up as an organizational account, and has 90 'fans'. Our promotional materials were available to all of



these people, but we have no way of knowing who viewed the material or if they connected to the survey website.

We also used Facebook as a tool to regularly encourage people to take the survey. The site was not used to identify participants, or to promote discussion of the survey among potential participants. In fact, whenever we promoted the survey, we consistently reminded Facebook users to refrain from commenting on or discussing the survey in order to protect the anonymity of potential participants. Furthermore, the account was monitored to ensure that participants were not identified in any way. Finally, it should be noted that the Facebook promotion did not link to the online survey directly, but was instead linked to the Around the Rainbow website, where people had the option to continue on to participate in the survey. In this way, we created a clear separation between our survey and the Facebook site. These precautions have meant that we were able to widely promote the survey online, utilizing existing Around the Rainbow networks, without any breaches of anonymity for our participants.

2-Data Collection

In reviewing the literature on conducting research with the LGBTTTQ community, we found that anonymous, self-selecting surveys were recommended. Meezan and Martin note that gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans research participants should remain anonymous and that “written consent does not afford them this added protection...when possible, anonymous surveys featuring self-administered questionnaires or phone interviews in which consent is implied rather than written, should be used”. (2009, p.25) Accordingly, the data collection methodology of the Rainbow Families Research Project consisted of the creation and implementation of an online survey hosted on Survey Monkey with separate sections of questions targeted to LGBTTTQ family members and service providers.

While service providers, as a group, do not face the same marginalization or discrimination as LGBTTTQ families, we believe that an anonymous online survey also constituted a suitable research form for their participation. We wanted to ensure that service providers felt comfortable in answering questions about the agencies they work for and the programs they offer. Designing the survey so that no identifying information was required of participants worked to decrease the risk to participants and therefore may have increased the number and detail of the responses. The Rainbow Families Research Project survey was open for a four-week period, from mid-January to early February 2010.



We estimate that the survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and provided this estimate to participants at the beginning of the survey. Participants were asked to complete the survey once only. Given the online nature of the survey, participants were able to choose for themselves the time and place of survey completion. In this way, we encouraged participants to provide complete and detailed responses.

The Rainbow Families Research Project survey included both open- and closed-ended questions. We believed that using a mainly quantitative survey would allow us to get a clear picture of the demographics of LGBTTQ families in the Ottawa region. At the same time, the surveys also included a few open-ended questions, which provided us with a richer, more detailed view of our participants' experiences. As noted above, the population addressed in the survey is diverse and complex. We believe that posing open-ended questions helped to recognize and accommodate this diversity.

In designing the survey, research team members incorporated a number of consultation processes, including consultation with both our fellow research students as well as Family Services à la Famille Ottawa and the Around the Rainbow Project. Feedback on the wording and design of questions was incorporated in the final survey. This process allowed us to utilize the experience of fellow students and of the Rainbow Family Coalition and FSFO in working with the LGBTTQ community. In this way, we also worked to mitigate researcher bias in the survey design. Meezan and Martin emphasize the importance of communicating to potential participants during the informed consent process the limitations of Internet technology in terms of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and security (2009). It should be noted that, because Survey Monkey is a US-based website, the data stored on the site may be accessed by the United States Government under the Patriot Act. Family Services à la Famille Ottawa is aware of limitation to participants' confidentiality. Participants were also made aware of this limitation to the survey's confidentiality during the consent process. It should be noted that this disclaimer did not appear to deter respondents from participating in the survey.

During the period of data collection, data was stored on a secure server, as part of Survey Monkey, and accessible only to research team members. Immediately following the close of data collection, the data was moved to a removable storage disk, again accessible only to research team members. At the conclusion of the project, the data will be turned over to Family Services à la Famille Ottawa.



3-Method of Analysis

The team members of the Rainbow Families Research Project elected to use both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods in examining the results of our survey. Quantitative analysis provided us with empirical evidence of our results, which we believe will satisfy those focused on supporting evidence-based practice. At the same time, the collection of qualitative data allowed marginalized voices to be heard and will, we believe, aid in the development of different or richer knowledge of the needs and experiences of the LGBTTTQ community.

Most of our quantitative data is presented in the form of frequencies, outlined later in this paper. These frequencies and other statistical analysis used in regard to the quantitative survey questions were completed electronically through the statistical analysis program SPSS. Due to a low number of responses, research team members were able to analyze the qualitative responses without the use of the NVivo program. The data was analyzed with the aim of identifying experiential themes and the unmet needs of LGBTTTQ families. After reading through all of the open-ended responses, the research team compiled a list of emerging themes. The analysis was divided amongst group members and then reviewed by the others in order to mitigate the risk of researcher bias.

It is our belief that using a mainly quantitative survey likely resulted in a higher response rate than if the survey had been completely qualitative. Indeed, the percentage of respondents who answered the qualitative questions was low, and these responses were often quite concise. This higher response rate allowed us to get a better picture of the demographics and experiences of LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region.

In presenting our results, we take into consideration Meezan and Martin's proposition that "researchers take care to...minimize the possibility that others could misuse them to harm the participants, the groups that they represent, or those who serve them". (2009, p.23) As our participants remain completely anonymous throughout the study, the data collected will also remain anonymous and non-attributed to participants. We believe that this anonymity, along with the combination of quantitative and qualitative survey data will work to minimize such dangers for our participants and for the LGBTTTQ community as a whole.



RESULTS

As outlined above, one of the purposes of the Rainbow Families Research Project was to obtain an overall demographic profile of LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region. The Project also aimed to identify the service needs of LGBTTTQ families and their children. As part of the needs assessment process, we worked to obtain some demographic information of the services available in the Ottawa region. The results of these demographic inquiries are outlined below. Survey participants included 31 people who identified themselves as members of LGBTTTQ families and 23 service providers. Four people identified themselves as being in both categories and completed both sets of questions. It should be noted that, both in regard to LGBTTTQ families and in regard to services available, the information below does not constitute a full picture of the Ottawa region. As we had a limited number of respondents in both categories, further research is needed to obtain more complete information about the Ottawa region as a whole.

1-Demographics of LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa Region

At the outset of the Project, it was our intention to use the demographic information obtained to map LGBTTTQ families, as well as available services, in the Ottawa region. However, we were sensitive to the fact that LGBTTTQ families in particular may be reluctant to specify their location. The research team deliberated at length as to how best to map families without endangering participant anonymity. In consultation with our colleagues, we decided to ask participants for the first three digits of their postal codes. With this information, it would be impossible to identify participants, but would be possible to draw a general map of LGBTTTQ families and services. Participants were informed that providing this information would in no way jeopardize their anonymity. Even so, few respondents provided their location. The low number and wide variety of responses regarding the location of families and services in the Ottawa region made the intended mapping of families and services irrelevant. Further research is required to obtain a fuller picture of how LGBTTTQ families and available services are distributed throughout the Ottawa region.

While we were not able to obtain a clear picture of the distribution of LGBTTTQ families across the Ottawa region, we were able to gather other demographic information from respondents. We asked a number of questions regarding the family structure of participants. The vast majority of participants (71%) came from families with two parents. Much less frequently, participants indicated single parent families (19.4%). Only two participants came from families with more than two parents; one family had four parents, and another had six.



The LGBTTTQ families represented in the survey had an average of two children each. In fact, the large majority of families had only one or two children (32.3% and 35.5% respectively). A smaller number (12.9%) of families had three children. In addition, one family had four children, one family had five children and one family had six children. The ages of the children in the families participating ranged widely. However, more families had children in the younger age brackets: from 0 to 6 years (51.6%) and from 7 to 12 years (35.5%). In the older age groups, 29% of families had children who were aged 13 to 18 years, and 25.8% of families had children who were 19 years or older.

We also asked LGBTTTQ family members how their children came into their families. During the consultation process regarding the survey design, FSO related that these stories would be important both for participants to tell, and for the research team to take into account. Indeed, 29 of the 31 LGBTTTQ family respondents answered this open-ended question, with a diversity of responses. Of this group, 45% identified artificial insemination, whether through alternative insemination, anonymous donor or known or planned sperm donor. Another significant group, (34.5%), explained that their children came into their family from a previous heterosexual relationship. Five respondents (17%) adopted their children through Children's Aid Society (CAS). Two respondents (7%) had used both adoption and artificial insemination to bring children into their families. One respondent explained that she was a bisexual woman who had a child with a current male partner. Another respondent explained that she was seventy-five years old and the mother of a number of grown children and grandchildren.

A final demographic question asked LGBTTTQ family participants if they or a member of their family were part of particular groups of interest to FSFO and Around the Rainbow: trans, two-spirit, people whose first language is other than English, and visible minorities. Over half of the respondents (51.6%) identified themselves or family members as being part of at least one of these groups, while 48.4% of respondents did not identify themselves as being part of any of these groups. The groups most represented among participants were people whose first language is other than English (29%) and members of visible minorities (22.6%). The trans and two-spirit groups were represented equally, each at 6% of respondents.

2-Services Accessed

The Rainbow Families Research Project also aimed to determine the demographics of the services available in the Ottawa region. As outlined above, we reached out to a large number of organizations, agencies and community resources for potential participants. At



its close, 23 service providers had completed the survey. Due to this low number of responses, mapping the location of services across the Ottawa region was deemed irrelevant. Instead, we have chosen to focus on the nature of the services provided.

The largest groups of service provider participants were those representing organizations that provide counselling (78.3%), educational services (56.5%), and parenting and youth support groups (52.2% each). There were also significant numbers of service provider participants whose agencies provide parenting courses (43.5%), and health and other services (30.4% each). Smaller numbers of respondents work for organizations providing child care and recreational services (13% each).

When asked how often they provided services to LGBTTTQ families, 13% said yearly, 26.1% said monthly, 13% said weekly, and 21.7% indicated that they serve LGBTTTQ families daily. It should be noted that 21.7% of service provider participants did not know how often they provide services to LGBTTTQ families. Participants providing some types of services indicated that they served LGBTTTQ families more often than those providing other services. In particular, child care providers, and those providing parenting courses and parenting support groups indicated that they served LGBTTTQ families most often, while health care and recreation providers served this population less often. Service providers were fairly evenly split as to whether or not they had received specialized training in providing services to LGBTTTQ families; 47.8% of respondents had received such training, while 52.2% had not. Those that had received specialized training indicated that this was provided by Around the Rainbow during their university training, through various workshops, through the Canadian Mental Health Association, or through seminars, one-day trainings, and guest speakers. One respondent had received two-spirit sensitivity training by Minwasshin Lodge and was actively involved with the GLBT Liason Committee through the Ottawa Police.

However, the organizations of most service providers (65.2%) did not provide specific services to LGBTTTQ families. Those that did provide specialized services reported that these consisted of LGBTTTQ support groups, general counselling and support for the LGBTTTQ community, and a post-adoption group for LGBTTTQ parents or adoptive parents. One respondent stated, “we are all inclusive and a safe space identified by rainbow stickers and having GLBT community members on team.” Around the Rainbow was mentioned as a specific service in the Ottawa area for LGBTTTQ families. Other program-specific references were Project Acorn (youth leadership retreat), and Camp Ten Oaks (one-week summer camp), which are programs for youth from LGBTTTQ families, or youth who identify as LGBTTTQ, and their allies.



Service providers were widely divided on the extent to which their organizations provide services that are inclusive and respectful of LGBTTTQ families. Only 21.7% of service providers felt that their organization provided inclusive service consistently, while 43.5% felt that their organization did so for the most part, and 30.4% felt that their organization was only somewhat inclusive. Providers of certain services were more likely to feel that their organization provided inclusive service. Recreational and child care providers were most likely to feel that their organization was inclusive and respectful of LGBTTTQ families, while health care and parent support group providers were least likely to do so. It should be noted that only one respondent felt that their organization's services were not at all inclusive or respectful of LGBTTTQ families.

When asked to elaborate on their efforts to ensure the inclusion and respectful treatment of LGBTTTQ families, a number of actions were described. Organizations explicitly mentioned that their organization provided a safe space for LGBTTTQ families and allies, provided agency-wide training to their staff on working with LGBTTTQ families (some training was specific to the transgender community), employed 'out' and "queer-identified" or "queer-friendly" workers, expressed openness and empathy to the needs of LGBTTTQ families and avoided making assumptions. Service providers noted that respect for LGBTTTQ families is shown through a commitment to social justice, privacy, the creation of safe space through actions and words, displaying a rainbow flag, providing literature, being aware of privilege and oppression and "addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes within the agency". Additionally, one agency communicates inclusion and respect of LGBTTTQ families by advertising their services in LGBTTTQ community newspapers, providing posters and pamphlets with images of LGBTTTQ families—and openly displaying these in the agency—and maintaining a presence at Pride and other community events.

We also examined the demographics of available services by asking LGBTTTQ family members about the services they currently access. Only two LGBTTTQ family members did not report accessing services. The services most accessed by the LGBTTTQ family participants were special/Pride events (67.7%), recreational services (58.1%), and health services (54.8%). Significant numbers of families also reported accessing educational services (35.5%), child care (32.3%), counselling and parent support groups (both 29%). Smaller numbers of families indicated that they access parenting courses (9.7%) and other services (12.9%). A large majority of participants reported accessing services both as individuals and as families (80.6%).



DISCUSSION

1-Barriers to Accessing Services

Of major importance to the research team was the need to identify barriers that may hinder LGBTTTQ families accessing services. Recognizing the importance of this issue, and the diversity of LGBTTTQ families, we invited family members to elaborate on their experience. When asked about the barriers to accessing services, 61% of LGBTTTQ family members took the opportunity to tell their stories.

Of the respondents who answered this open-ended question, 53% identified homophobia as a barrier for accessing services. In fact, only 19.4% of all LGBTTTQ family member participants reported that they had never experienced discrimination when accessing services for their families. An additional 25.8% reported rarely experiencing discrimination, while 38.7% reported sometimes experiencing discrimination, and 9.7% indicated that they often experience discrimination. One respondent reported experiencing discrimination very often. Participants who identified that they or someone in their family was trans reported much higher levels of discrimination than any other group.

Similarly, only 22.6% of LGBTTTQ family member participants felt that they and their families were consistently accepted by most services. A much larger portion of the participants felt accepted for the most part (41.9%) or somewhat accepted (32.3%) by most services. When asked if most services they use respect LGBTTTQ families, only 12.9% felt that their families were consistently respected by services. Again, most felt that their families were respected only for the most part (45.2%) or somewhat (32.3%). One participant indicated that most services did not respect LGBTTTQ families at all.

It should be noted that users of certain types of services were more likely to report experience discrimination than users of other services. LGBTTTQ family members who accessed parenting courses and counselling services reported experiencing higher levels of discrimination, while those who accessed educational services reported the lowest levels of discrimination. LGBTTTQ family members also indicated lower levels of respect for LGBTTTQ families among parenting courses and counselling services; the highest levels of respect were reported by families accessing health and recreational services. Counselling services also scored lower in terms of acceptance of LGBTTTQ families, while families using health and recreational services reported the highest levels of acceptance for their families.

Participants identified the nature of the discrimination experienced in “agencies not acknowledging family types other than traditional nuclear families”. Two respondents expressed that they were not accepted as the legitimate mothers of their non-biological children. One explained, “Once staff meets one mother, they don’t expect there to be a



second and so I am often ignored”. Another participant explained that they were “fearful that the children would suffer homophobic remarks or attitudes if they were open about being a LGBTTTQ family”. Two respondents identified trans-phobia as a problem, and reported that there are not enough services and supports specifically for trans-families. Interestingly, one trans participant explained, “Being a trans-parent meant that many services providers take me as a female and my family as a typical heterosexual family”. In this way, discrimination is experienced as a lack of knowledge about the needs of trans families.

One participant explained that while she had not directly experienced homophobia, the conventional representation of mainstream heterosexual families and parents within agency settings is limiting and acts as a barrier for LGBTTTQ families. Another respondent echoed the difficulty of being a nuclear family within the LGBTTTQ community and the feeling of “living apart”. One participant explained that “preschool programs and recreation programs in the main assume that kids come from 2-parent heterosexual families”. Another expressed frustration with having to explain her family structure “over and over again”. A fellow participant lamented “constantly having to educate services providers about our family before being able to access services”.

Two LGBTTTQ family members raised the point that external and internalized homophobia in education and in the medical field impacts on their ability to access services, and on their children’s experience of services. Direct forms of discrimination were identified. One participant wrote, “We and our children were the focus of anti-gay comments at school functions and the kids were bullied in both the Catholic and Public schools”. Another respondent described, “We did run into one incident where the non-biological parent’s relationship to our daughter was questioned at the hospital”.

Service providers also identified homophobia, “lack of sensitivity to the needs of LGBTTTQ individuals, lack of knowledge of the discrimination and barriers faced by LGBTTTQ individuals, lack of understanding,” stigmatization, fear of stigma, lack of sensitivity training for working with the transgender community, and lack of resources as barriers to effective services for LGBTTTQ families. The lack of specialized training, insufficient services for LGBTTTQ families and not all “LGBTTTQ families feeling a sense of belonging to the community” were also noted. One service provider expressed the opinion that “Service providers that do not identify as LGBTTTQ should not be in a leadership role. Counsellors, front-line staff, and management should all include individuals who are members of the [LGBTTTQ] community”. Service providers identified heterosexism in the ways in which services usually do not affirm LGBTTTQ family structure, in how partner abuse services rarely address abuse in same-sex relationships, and in how parenting course are primarily attended by heterosexual couples.



Six (31%) of the LGBTTTQ family members responding to the open-ended question regarding barriers to service reported that cost, time or location acted as barriers to accessing services. In particular, cost was cited specifically by four respondents. One participant wrote about the difficulty of finding services for LGBTTTQ families in rural and small town settings, as well as the hardship of having to travel a distance to access the kinds of services the family needed. Three respondents identified that being unable to access child care was a barrier for them to take part in support programs and counselling. One explained, "Child care is a constant barrier – we would take advantage of many more services and activities if we had low-cost, reliable child care". Two LGBTTTQ family members indicated that the times that programs and services were available posed a challenge for them.

Finally, 26% of LGBTTTQ family members responding to the open-ended question regarding barriers to service access wrote that there are not enough dedicated courses, programs or services for children of LGBTTTQ parents, and that there are insufficient services for older children of LGBTTTQ families. One respondent observed that some families feel isolated and unsure of where to go for help. Another indicated that "it would be great to have more support groups for LGBTTTQ families dealing with difficult issues".

2-Unmet Needs of LGBTTTQ Families and Their Children

In addition to addressing the barriers LGBTTTQ families face in accessing services, the Rainbow Families Research Project also strove to identify the unmet service needs of LGBTTTQ families and their children. As indicated by the results above, discrimination and a lack of acceptance and respect for LGBTTTQ families constitute major barriers to these families accessing services. Therefore, the provision of inclusive services remains one unmet need of LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region.

While service providers largely view themselves as sufficiently knowledgeable about the needs of LGBTTTQ families, (30.4% felt they have significant knowledge and 52.2% reported having some knowledge), only 6.5% of LGBTTTQ family member participants indicated that service providers were consistently knowledgeable about their family's needs. Seven respondents explained that discrimination was often expressed in the mainstream ignorance about LGBTTTQ families. One participant wrote, "Mostly it's not intentional or overt. It often stems from a lack of knowledge". In fact, 61.5% of LGBTTTQ family members felt that service providers were only sometimes knowledgeable, and 22.6% felt that service providers were often knowledgeable. Interestingly, LGBTTTQ family members who accessed parenting courses were the least likely to find these services



knowledgeable about their families' needs. Users of health care and recreation services reported the highest degree of service knowledge.

Furthermore, while most service providers described their agencies as providing inclusive services for the most part (43.5%) or consistently (21.7%), LGBTTTQ family members were more divided on the level of respect services had for their needs. Indeed, when asked if they felt that service providers are respectful of their families' needs, only 6.5% of LGBTTTQ family members felt their needs were consistently respected; 41.9% felt their needs were often respected, 45.2% felt their needs were sometimes respected, and 3.2% felt their needs were never respected. One participant noted, "I find Ottawa to be fairly tolerant, but not necessarily embracing or supportive of LGBTTTQ families". Another cited "a lack of inclusive language and information provided by agencies". LGBTTTQ family members who accessed parenting courses reported the least respect for their needs, while those accessing educational services reported the highest level of respect for their needs.

Fourteen respondents elaborated on how service providers were respectful or disrespectful. Examples of disrespect were described in such things as, "ignoring the number of parents that actually exist in the family", "not acknowledging both parents", or "heterosexist assumptions that negate different experiences of families". One participant described an instance of "refusing to recognize school yard bullying as related to the child's LGBTTTQ family structure". Another wrote about "agencies using generic forms that assume heterosexual couples or families".

Seven participants described experiences of respect when accessing services for their families. For example, respondents wrote that "most staff are respectful of our roles as parents when speaking of our children" and that "service providers are usually willing to learn about our specific needs as an LGBTTTQ family". One LGBTTTQ family member explained, "Child care and health services use the appropriate term for each of us as we've asked. Some do this and we appreciate it, while others don't and it's aggravating".

While respondents did report some ways in which their families were respected by service providers, the vast majority of LGBTTTQ family members who participated in the Rainbow Families Research Project indicated a need for services that are more inclusive and accepting of LGBTTTQ families. In fact, 48.4% of participants saw a large need for more inclusive services and 41.9% reported some need. Only one participant saw rare need, and one participant saw no need for more inclusive and accepting services. Participants who identified that they or someone in their family is trans reported higher levels of need for inclusive services than any other group.



It is important to note here that service providers who had received specialized training regarding serving LGBTTTQ families felt both more knowledgeable and that their organizations provided more inclusive service, compared to service providers who had not received specialized training. Service providers who provide recreational services and parent and youth support groups felt least knowledgeable about the needs of LGBTTTQ families. Child care providers, a group that has been targeted for training in recent years, indicated the highest level of knowledge.

Service providers whose organizations provide dedicated services to LGBTTTQ families also felt more knowledgeable about the needs of these families than did service providers whose organizations do not provide dedicated services. One service provider made the important distinction between services provided *for* LGBTTTQ families and those provided *with* LGBTTTQ families, noting that their agency had heard “a lot back from various families” on this issue. This respondent explained, “Many agencies want to provide services for LGBTQ families, but don’t necessarily get the issues families are facing or provide what’s needed”. These findings suggest that training and education for service providers can work towards meeting the need for more inclusive services for LGBTTTQ families in Ottawa.

When asked which types of services they do not currently access, but would like to access in the future, LGBTTTQ family members indicated a variety of wanted services. Most popular amongst these service wants were parenting courses, counselling, recreational services, and parent and youth support groups (each cited by 12.9% of participants). Under the “other” category, five respondents identified child and youth recreational activities, summer camp, and family counselling geared toward children born of artificial insemination to queer parents. One respondent identified the need to make the education system “queer and trans-friendly”. Families with children between the ages of 7 and 12 reported higher levels of need than families with children in the other age brackets. Insufficient services targeted to this group could therefore also be considered an unmet need.

Fifteen LGBTTTQ family members elaborated further on service needs that are not currently being met. Three participants expressed that school curriculum is heterosexist and needs to be changed for “better education opportunities in the community”. Respondents also indicated a need for better advocacy for children of LGBTTTQ families within Catholic schools. Eight LGBTTTQ family members identified the need for counselling or support groups for children. This included peer support groups for children of LGBTTTQ families. One respondent identified needs for counselling for older children and for



supports for children of LGBTTTQ families regarding family separation and moving into blended families.

Service providers echoed the calls for more recreational opportunities, support groups and therapy groups for the children of LGBTTTQ families. Specifically, it was noted that there is a need for “activities/psycho-social or psycho-educational groups for children ages 6-12 years of age”. There was a specific mention of the need for more Around the Rainbow training sessions in the schools to make “safer spaces for children”. It was also noted that schools should provide LGBTTTQ positive books, activities and homework that depicts LGBTTTQ people and addresses gender stereotypes. Finally, service providers recommended that there be more programming that is specific to youth who identify as LGBTTTQ or questioning.

LGBTTTQ family members also identified unmet service needs of LGBTTTQ parents, including educational opportunities or retreats for LGBTTTQ parents, as well as networking opportunities for LGBTTTQ parents. Post adoption supports and courses for adoptive parents were also cited as unmet needs in the LGBTTTQ community. Service providers also elaborated on the unmet needs of parents in LGBTTTQ families. Programming specific to the needs of the parents of LGBTTTQ youth was identified as one such gap in service. Also identified was the need for information and groups for prospective LGBTTTQ moms and dads on topics such as how to get pregnant and adoption options.

Service providers expressed a lack of specialized individual, couple and family counselling options for LGBTTTQ families. A need for training on LGBTTTQ issues in the recreation sector (sports, camps, lessons) was similarly identified. As well, it was noted that there should be more programs where LGBTTTQ parents can participate with their children, and that there is a need for more support and therapeutic groups—particularly outside of the downtown area. The lack of supportive opportunities in which LGBTTTQ families can participate ‘as a family’ stood out from these results.

CONCLUSION

1-Limitations of the Study

As mentioned above, the number of people who responded to our survey was not sufficient to draw any conclusions about the Ottawa region as a whole. In fact, twenty people began the survey process, and closed the survey without answering any of the questions. It is possible that some of these blank responses may have resulted from



research team members reviewing the survey throughout the process. Another possibility is that participants began the survey process, but decided once the survey began that they did not have sufficient time to complete it. Some of these people may have returned and completed the survey at a later time. Because we did not track where the responses came from, we have no way of knowing whether or not this is the case. Furthermore, these suggestions about the potential causes of the high number of blank survey responses are only speculation. Unfortunately, this is one of the disadvantages of researching through an online, anonymous survey. However, as we have discussed above, we believe that using this survey format was important in considering the needs of the population in question.

A second limitation of the study involves its reliance on participants self-identifying as being part of an LGBTTTQ family. For example, children or youth who are themselves LGBTTTQ may not necessarily see themselves as part of an LGBTTTQ family. Similarly, heterosexual former partners of LGBTTTQ parents may not identify themselves as part of an LGBTTTQ family. While we worked to be as inclusive as possible in the language used in our promotion of the survey and in the survey itself, there may have been some people who did not feel included.

Finally, our study was limited by the time constraints put upon it by the fact that the research was undertaken as an assignment for a post-secondary course. The research team had initially thought to follow the online survey with focus groups for LGBTTTQ families and service providers, which may have provided even richer information. However, the time constraints of the course dictated that the Project be focused solely on the online survey in order to reach as many people as possible within the time allotted. Furthermore, the time constraints meant that the survey was only posted online for one month. Having the survey posted online and available to participants for a longer period may have resulted in a higher response rate from both LGBTTTQ families and service providers.

2-Closing Remarks

The Rainbow Families Research Project's results show the need to bring LGBTTTQ people together for support, social and recreational activities where they can be seen and accepted as "real" families. There is a significant need to reduce the discrimination and heterosexism that LGBTTTQ families face when accessing social services. Service provider and LGBTTTQ family responses were consistent in identifying service provider training as a key area in need of attention, with particular attention to the needs of trans people. Indeed, our study found that there is a need to increase specialized services for LGBTTTQ parents—to provide more parenting, youth, counseling and recreational services in the Ottawa area.



In particular, LGBTTTQ family members would like to see enhanced service promotion, the creation of more social events for families, and the development of supportive programs around parenting issues that LGBTTTQ families face. For example, one participant would like to see supports or programs aimed at supporting parents to maintain good working relationships throughout a separation. Two LGBTTTQ family members expressed the need for agencies to better promote programs, courses and social events through Around the Rainbow, or through school newsletters. Two respondents would like to see agencies organizing social events, barbeques and recreational events for LGBTTTQ families on weekends.

It should be noted that some LGBTTTQ respondents felt excluded by the survey's design. Two LGBTTTQ family members stated that the survey did not allow for them to include their experiences/identity. One respondent explained that she was now an adult, but had grown up in an LGBTTTQ family. This respondent stressed the need for better programs and services for older children living in LGBTTTQ families. Another respondent felt that the survey assumed that the "family" was made of two parents or at least that they live together, writing, "There is no place for me to say we are a two parent family that parent together but live apart". Further research and focus groups are recommended to obtain more detailed information about the needs of LGBTTTQ families, and to better capture the distinctive experiences, identities and structures of LGBTTTQ families. Additionally, future research is needed to determine the most effective training directions for service providers.

Utilizing social media in the promotion of our research was an interesting exercise. The process was still new enough that some education had to be done in relation to the university Research Ethics Board, to assure them that participant risk would not increase in using this technology. As social networking sites become more prominent, we believe they will provide an important tool for the promotion and conducting of research. It will certainly be important for researchers to continue to emphasize the minimization of risk to research participants as this process develops. However, the effort is worthwhile, particularly for social work research, as online social media give voice to a wide diversity of people. As Hash and Spencer state, "The internet offers a vast and anonymous space for LGBTTTQ people to network and is useful for engaging traditionally hard to reach members of the LGBTTTQ community in research". (2009, p. 244) Social workers would do well to take advantage of these opportunities in their research practices.

The results of the Rainbow Families Research Project raise concerns about ongoing homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism within social, recreational, health and



educational services in the Ottawa area. Research has shown that discrimination and isolation have detrimental impacts on mental health (Meyer, 2007) and impair the ability of children to excel in school. (Kosciw and Diaz, 2008) There are gaps in specialized services for LGBTTTQ families, and a significant lack of awareness, sensitivity and inclusion of LGBTTTQ families in existing agencies and institutions. The knowledge and expertise to train staff members of local agencies and institutions on working respectfully with the LGBTTTQ community exist, but the results of this study suggest that these resources are not being accessed. A sense of community helps LGBTTTQ families maintain their resiliency while dealing with the stress of discrimination. (Meyer, 2007) As illustrated by the research, community and family-oriented activities are vital to the health and vitality of LGBTTTQ families.

We believe that research can contribute to social work's commitment to the pursuit of social justice and social change. Indeed, Schwartz and van de Sande write that "just as social work is committed to social justice and social change, the aim of social work research should be the same". (Introduction, forthcoming, p.1) It has been our goal to ensure that the Rainbow Families Research Project may contribute to this end. We have identified five key areas as requiring action in working toward social justice for LGBTTTQ families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Specialized Training for Service Providers:** Responses from family members and service providers were consistent in reporting that there is a significant need for service providers to receive training on providing services to LGBTTTQ families. Only 6.7% of LGBTTTQ respondents felt that service providers were consistently knowledgeable about their needs and the needs of their family, and only 19.4% reported that they had never experienced discrimination when accessing services for their family. Respondents made the distinction between service providers who were merely tolerant, versus those who had taken responsibility for educating themselves on the issues that LGBTTTQ families face. Results confirm the findings of previous research reporting that while LGBTTTQ families have "fought hard to win the right to be recognized as parents legally through the birth and adoption process" (Janmohamad, 2006, p.3), wide-spread discrimination persists in their day- to-day parenting and community interactions.
2. **LGBTTTQ Community Outreach and Development Initiatives:** There should be more social and recreational opportunities for LGBTTTQ families to participate, within their own community, as a family. Our study found that the community services LGBTTTQ families most frequently access are "Special/Pride events" (72.4%) and recreational



services (62.1%). That respondents identified a need for more recreational services for their families is not surprising, especially given that involvement in the LGBTTTQ community has been shown to have protective factors against discrimination and contributes to resiliency. (Meyer, 2007)

3. **Inclusive and Accepting Services for Trans People:** Trans respondents overwhelmingly identified a “large need” for services that are more inclusive and accepting of LGBTTTQ families. In comparison to other groups, this result was significantly higher than the degree of need identified by other groups within the LGBTTTQ community. This greater need is reflected in the research, as trans individuals are a minority within a minority group, remaining “largely invisible within society and academia”. (Cashore and Tuason, 2009, p.337)
4. **More Specialized Parenting Courses, Youth and Counselling Services:** Families identified that there is a need for more parenting courses, parent support groups, child/youth groups, and counselling services that are tailored to meet the needs of LGBTTTQ families. Most respondents indicated that they would prefer one-time parenting courses (74.2%), and specialized groups for LGBTTTQ parents (74.2%). The availability of services that recognize and accommodate the particular needs of LGBTTTQ families is a basic right in our society and social service providers must change to reflect the diverse needs of their communities. (Johmohamed, 2006)
5. **Follow-up Research:** There is a need for a more in-depth exploration of the needs of LGBTTTQ families in the Ottawa region than our Project was able to provide. Focus groups would be an ideal setting to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the larger issues that we have investigated in this study. The results of our study also indicate a need for future research into the nature of the training provided to service providers. These results reflect aspects of Evans and Barker’s study where service providers recognized the need for social change, yet continued to use “heterosexist and homophobic societal discourses”. (2007, p.40) In fact, none of the relationship counsellors in Evans and Barker’s study “were aware of research spanning the last twenty-five years on same-sex parenting and its outcomes”. (2007, p.40) Further research is also required regarding the unique experiences LGBTTTQ family members who identify as two-spirit, as members of a visible minority and as having a first language other than English.



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Rainbow Families Final Report

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/15-Rainbow-Families-Final-Report.pdf>

Violence in LGBTQ Families and the Impact on Children (by Hannah McGeachie)

The area of domestic violence which hasn't been explored to quite the same degree is when the violence happens in same-sex relationships. There are plenty of assumptions about lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals and communities which contribute to this research gap. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has an impact on how willing researchers are to look at this type of violence and how likely victims are to report it. There is also a remarkable lack of literature around the impact of domestic violence on the children in LGBTQ families.

This report will look at violence in LGBTQ families, the impact of this violence on the children in the families, and what resources are available in Ottawa for these families. The strengths and gaps in service of resources in Ottawa will be identified and recommendations will be made. Due to the gaps in the literature, this report includes some research about domestic violence in general but looks at it through a lens that emphasizes the impact of homophobia and heterosexism.





INTRODUCTION

In the past several decades, many academics and practitioners have turned their attention to violence within families and intimate relationships. While stereotypes and assumptions about domestic violence – such as the idea that we are more likely to be victimized by a stranger on the street than within our own homes by someone we know quite well – still thrive, the study of domestic violence has opened up a space where these ideas can be challenged. This violence isn't quite the private struggle of the individual victim that it was in the 1950s.

The area of domestic violence which hasn't been explored to quite the same degree is when the violence happens in same-sex relationships. There are plenty of assumptions about lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals and communities which contribute to this research gap. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has an impact on how willing researchers are to look at this type of violence and how likely victims are to report it. There is also a remarkable lack of literature around the impact of domestic violence on the children in LGBTQ families.

This report will look at violence in LGBTQ families, the impact of this violence on the children in the families, and what resources are available in Ottawa for these families. The strengths and gaps in service of resources in Ottawa will be identified and recommendations will be made. Due to the gaps in the literature, this report includes some research about domestic violence in general but looks at it through a lens that emphasizes the impact of homophobia and heterosexism.

THE PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE IN LGBTQ FAMILIES

Getting an accurate picture of the rates of violence in LGBTQ families has proved to be very difficult. In the data that Statistics Canada collects from the police, courts, corrections and individuals, the number of respondents who report experiencing this type of violence is so low that it is often statistically insignificant and cannot be analyzed on its own. Instead, it is often combined with the number of respondents who experience violence in heterosexual families (Statistics Canada, 2009). In the cases that the reporting numbers have been statistically significant, it is estimated that:

- one percent of heterosexual-identified individuals and between 2-4% of LGBT-identified individuals are violently victimized;



- seven percent of heterosexual-identified individuals report experiencing dating or domestic violence, and the number jumps to 15-28% for LGBTQ-identified individuals;
- fourteen percent of heterosexual-identified individuals feel they have been discriminated against in the past five years, while 41-44% of LGBTQ-identified individuals feel the same way; and
- of those who have experienced violence in their families, 28% of heterosexual-identified victims and less than 1% of LGBTQ-identified victims have reported the violence to the police (Beauchamp, 2004).

Other researchers in this area have faced similar struggles in establishing what the rates of violence in LGBTQ families are. Most studies about this type of violence have focused on well-educated, white lesbian women; when violence in gay male relationships is studied, physical and sexual violence is focused on above all other types. (Turrell, 2000) In Turrell's review of domestic violence studies, abusive behaviours were found in 48% of lesbian relationships and 47% of gay male relationships. Kirkland's (2004) review of literature suggests that violence in families happens at the same rates among lesbian, gay male and heterosexual relationships. He found that one in five gay men will experience domestic violence, and that it is one of the biggest health crises in gay male communities following HIV and substance abuse.

The theory that does emerge more in discussions around violence in LGBTQ relationships versus violence in heterosexual relationships is that of mutual or "common couple" violence. (McHugh, 2005) "Contradictions in the literature between documentation of women as battered by their male partners and research indicating that men and women perpetrate equal levels of domestic violence may be understood as the study of different patterns of intimate abuse. Researchers may be like the proverbial blind men examining different aspects of the elephant". (McHugh, 2005, 718) The idea that gender roles and socialization play a large part in domestic violence has been explored a great deal in the study of heterosexual relationships but not in LGBTQ ones. How gender roles are challenged or reinforced in LGBTQ relationships is an area where more study is needed, especially if we are to understand how having a partner of the same gender affects power dynamics in an intimate relationship.

Another area where more study is required is around the actual reporting of violence in LGBTQ relationships. There is often great fear in LGBTQ communities about acknowledging that violence occurs in LGBTQ relationships as well as heterosexual ones (Rohrbaugh, 2006). With the amount of discrimination against LGBTQ individuals and communities, there is pressure for those who belong to this group to constantly look



better-than-good and always functional. Admitting that violence happens within LGBTQ relationships is often seen as contributing to the view of an LGBTQ lifestyle as a dysfunctional one, and this may impact the likelihood of a victim reporting domestic violence to the police or anyone else. (Irwin, 2008) Other potential factors in the reporting of violence in LGBTQ relationships include the impact of gender role socialization (which often makes it easier for women to report themselves in victim roles), the lack of discussion about what healthy LGBTQ relationships look like and thus the lack of recognition of abuse when it occurs, and the denial of those who the abuse is reported to that violence can occur in LGBTQ relationships. (Turrell, 2000; McHugh, 2005)

WHAT DOES VIOLENCE IN LGBTQ FAMILIES LOOK LIKE?

As noted above, the rate of violence in LGBTQ relationships involving women is slightly higher; however, it is very possible that this is due to female victims feeling like they can report being abused more than male victims can. Violence in gay male relationships is far more likely to be seen as a mutual fight rather than abuse, and as lesbians victims are more likely to fight back against their aggressors, the violence in their relationships is more likely to be seen as mutual than when the relationship involves a man and woman. (Rohrbaugh, 2006)

One main difference between male and female victims in LGBTQ relationships is that female victims are far more likely to have their children used against them, especially if the children are from a previous heterosexual relationship. (Turrell, 2000) Many victims who are not out fear that their children may be taken away or that their ex-partner may be given full custody if their sexual orientation were to become known. If the child is not the biological child of or legally adopted by the victim, the abuser can threaten to take the child away. These fears and threats are designed to keep the victim in the abusive relationship, and they often work. (Turrell, 2000)

One of the main research questions in the study of violence in LGBTQ relationships is what is at the root of the violence and how the involved individuals are affected. Overwhelmingly, the research has found that the reasons behind and effects of this violence is the same as in heterosexual relationships. Abusers frequently feel that they lack power and control over their own lives and so they try to assert it in other areas, socialized gender roles play out, and how individuals learned to behave from their families of origin and their peers is carried into new relationships. (Eaton, Kaufman, Fuhrel, Cain, Cherry, Pope, & Kalichman, 2008; Irwin, 2008; Craft & Serovich, 2005; McClennen, Summers & Vaughan, 2002; McKenry, Serovich, Mason & Mosack, 2006) Victims feel isolated, guilty, angry and



trapped; many do not recognize the behaviour as abusive at first, and struggle over whether to leave or not because many still love their abuser and are also concerned about how leaving will affect their personal and financial safety. (Cruz, 2003)

The difference between violence in LGBTQ and heterosexual relationships is that the homophobic and heterosexist nature of our society has more of an impact on the former group. This societal context makes it harder for LGBTQ individuals to come out and ask for help, provides them with few models of what healthy LGBTQ relationships look like, limits the services and resources that are tailored to them, and largely ignores their experiences. (Irwin, 2008; Rohrbaugh, 2006; Craft & Serovich, 2005) The differences between LGBTQ and heterosexual relationship violence is not due to the sexual orientations of those involved, but the impact of the homophobia and heterosexism that they are exposed to.

WHAT ARE THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO THIS VIOLENCE IS REPORTED TO?

Dishearteningly, there is a resistance in many LGBTQ communities to acknowledge and address violence in LGBTQ relationships out of fear that it will give strength to the idea of LGBTQ identities and relationships being dysfunctional. (Murray, Mobley, Buford & Seaman-DeJohn, 2007) There is also resistance from the community of service providers working to prevent and react to domestic violence to address this violence. “In exploring women’s violence, there is always the risk that it might be used to undermine the struggle to address male violence against women”. (Irwin, 2008, 203) While these fears are most likely valid – some individuals will use acknowledgements that violence occurs in LGBTQ relationships and isn’t always a man abusing a woman for their own agendas – to not acknowledge this violence is to bury our heads in the sand and hope the problem will just go away on its own. It is possible and necessary to build on the foundation of the violence against women movement and engage in capacity building to address all forms of domestic violence.

When victims do seek support, they are most likely to turn to friends, who are more likely than family members to know about the victims’ sexual orientation and be okay with it. (Irwin, 2008) While many victims find they receive limited support from their friends and family and want to seek support from LGBTQ communities instead, they encounter barriers in that these communities may not want to believe violence occurs in them. (Merlis & Linville, 2006) Depending on the geographical area, LGBTQ communities are often quite small and tight-knit, which can make the victim feel like he or she cannot obtain confidential support from another member of the community who doesn’t also know the abuser. (Turell & Cornell-Swanson, 2005) Some service providers refuse to support LGBTQ



victims, often because of the heterosexist nature of their service: many services are for women only, automatically excluding male victims. (McKenry, Serovich, Mason & Mosack, 2006) Those that do support LGBTQ victims also tend to operate in a heterosexist manner, not taking into account the effects of living in a homophobic and heterosexist society. (Irwin, 2008) Many are thrown off by the absence of a gender difference in the relationship; the gendered markers of who is the victim and who is the abuser are missing. (Irwin, 2008) Many gay male victims are met with shock and worse, disbelief, that a man could be victimized and that battering could occur between two men. (McClennen, Summers & Vaughan, 2002)

THE ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL HOMOPHOBIA

Both external (coming from other people, usually located outside the LGBTQ community) and internal homophobia (individuals' negative feelings about identifying as LGBTQ) have had a profound impact on the study and experience of domestic violence in LGBTQ relationships. External homophobia has created a wall of invisibility around LGBTQ relationships and all of their aspects, including legal rights, family structure and domestic violence. (Irwin, 2008) Dominant heteronormative discourses create an absence of discussion about violence in LGBTQ relationships, constructing the idea that domestic violence is a heterosexual issue only and limiting any contradictory dialogue. (Irwin, 2008) Myths about LGBTQ individuals and gender roles ("boys will be boys and will fight back", "gay men find violence arousing", "relationships are comprised of one man and one woman") make it hard for individuals experiencing violence in LGBTQ relationships to come forward and talk about their experiences. (Kirkland, 2004) Additionally, the isolation that victims of domestic violence often experience can be compounded with isolation due to other factors, such as sexual orientation and health status, making it even harder for victims in LGBTQ relationships to report violence. (Kirkland, 2004)

Some authors have suggested the external and internalized homophobia is a factor in some cases of violence in LGBTQ relationships. McKenry, Serovich, Mason and Mosack (2006) apply the framework of disempowerment theory to this type of violence. Disempowerment theory posits that those who feel inadequate or lacking in self-efficiency are at risk of using unconventional means of power assertion, such as violence. These individuals deal with their feelings of disempowerment by trying to control the people they perceive to be threatening or who could expose their insecurities. Alcohol and substances are often used to mask feelings of disempowerment and vulnerability, and they are also tied to higher rates of violence. (Eaton, Kaufman, Fuhrel, Cain, Cherry, Pope, & Kalichman, 2008; McKenry, Serovich, Mason & Mosack, 2006; McClennen, Summers & Vaughan, 2002)



Many studies have found that there are high rates of alcohol and substance use and abuse in LGBTQ communities, and this has been tied to the need to cope with external and internalized homophobia. (McClennen, Summers & Vaughan, 2002)

For victims who are in their first LGBTQ relationship or whose past LGBTQ relationships have also been abusive, a mental link between the violence and the fact that the relationship is an LGBTQ and not a heterosexual one is sometimes formed. This can lead to internalized homophobia and the idea that LGBTQ relationships are innately dysfunctional. As LGBTQ relationships in general are rarely talked about, many individuals do not have a frame of reference for what a healthy one looks like.

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

There is virtually no research on the impact of violence in LGBTQ relationships on children. When there is a link between this violence and children, it is limited to the children being used by the abuser to threaten and control the victim and questions around the custody of the children. The other link that frequently comes up is the impact of childhood sexual abuse on individuals who came out as LGBTQ later in life. (Catania, Paul, Osmond, Folkman, Pollack, Canchola, Chang & Neilands, 2008) While this is a very interesting area of study and is somewhat related, it does not speak to the gap in research around the impact of violence in LGBTQ relationships on children. Due to this lack of literature, this section of the report will extrapolate information from the research on violence in LGBTQ relationships as well as the impact of domestic violence in general on children.

Research has found that when there is violence between intimate partners, the chances are higher that any children in the family will also be abused. (Von Steen, 1997) Even if they are not, many researchers and practitioners consider witnessing violence as abuse on its own as it can be very traumatic for the child and create an unsafe environment. There has traditionally been a great deal of focus on how to support children and adolescents who witness domestic violence, and less of a focus on supporting adults who witnessed violence as children. (Von Steen, 1997) A recent shift in literature has moved to address this, noting that the effects of childhood abuse and growing up surrounded by violence in the home can have very long lasting effects on an individual, including trauma symptoms and abusive behaviour. Diamond and Muller (2004) investigated whether the levels of psychopathology among young adults were related to childhood experiences of witnessing violence and found that there was a close tie between the two, but only among male individuals.



Studies with children as young as a few months old who witness domestic violence have found that even if the children cannot later remember the violence incidents, they exhibit symptoms of trauma and can often be diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. (Bogat, DeJonghe, Levendosky, Davidson & von Eye, 2006) The severity of the violence as well as the mother's level of distress are tied to the level of trauma the child experiences. Children who witness their mothers being abused are also more likely to exhibit "externalizing behaviours" (are more aggressive with others) and other problematic behaviours; children who witnessed the abuse of their mothers and were also abused themselves were also at higher risk for "internalized behaviours" (anxiety, depression). (Kernic, Wolf, Holt, McKnight, Huebner & Rivara, 2003)

Another impact of witnessing or experiencing domestic violence as a child is the potential for intergenerational transmission of this violence. Family systems, modelling and social learning theories all posit that we learn how to behave from what we are taught and what we witness as we are growing up. (Craft & Serovich, 2005) They suggest – and research strongly supports their hypothesis - that if we are raised in a respectful environment where violence and abuse of any kind are not tolerated, we replicate this behaviour in our own intimate relationships; if we are raised in an environment where power and control are gained through fear and violence, this is how we learn to interact with others. (Wareham, Boots & Chavez, 2009)

In Jankowski, Leitenburg, Henning and Coffey's 1999 study about gender and the intergenerational transmission of dating aggression, they found that children who had witnessed a parent of the same sex in the role of the abuser were at higher risk of engaging in dating aggression. Children who had witnessed both parents being abusive were also more likely than the control group who had never witnessed domestic violence to be aggressive in their intimate relationships. Children whose opposite sex parent was the abuser were no more likely than the control group to become abusive or victimized in later intimate relationships. While this study did not speak to the effect of both parents being of the same or opposite gender as the child, it has begun a conversation about behaviour modelling based on gender sameness or difference.

Bevan and Higgins' (2002) study also looked at the intergenerational transmission of violence, but widened the scope to look at all forms of child abuse, including violence, neglect and witnessing. They found that men who had been violently abused as children were more likely to engage in physical violence with an intimate partner, but less likely to engage in psychological abuse. Being neglected as a child also predicted a higher level of physical abuse of an intimate partner. Solely witnessing domestic violence but not being the direct victim of it as a child was closely tied with the psychological abuse of an intimate



partner and a high prevalence of trauma symptoms, which also have adverse effects on intimate relationships.

As with some adult victims of violence in LGBTQ relationships, children may come to associate the violence with the fact that the relationship is an LGBTQ one. Homophobic and heterosexist discourses are so engrained in our society that they are hard to recognize; it is difficult to identify the effects they have on our lives and how they make us see different events. Children often do not have another home life to compare the abusive one they know with, and so they might come to see violence and/or violence in LGBTQ relationships as normal. They may often not see their LGBTQ family represented at school or among their friends' families, and this serves to further isolate them and perhaps make them resentful of their own family structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Survey of service providers working in the field of domestic violence about level of awareness of issues specific to violence in LGBTQ relationships.

Many service providers could already be aware of the specific issues that individuals experiencing violence in LGBTQ relationships face and are independently incorporating this knowledge into their practice. Even if a service or agency in general does not appear to have specific resources or staff training around this type of violence, the individuals working there might. A survey to determine the level of awareness and knowledge will give a better idea of what the reality "on the ground" is, and where additional steps need to be taken to improve services.

Recommendation #2: Creation and implementation of a training workshop for service providers around clients who are experiencing violence in LGBTQ relationships.

If a survey of service providers is completed, it could guide the creation of a training workshop for these workers around working with clients who experience violence in LGBTQ relationships. A great deal of research and thought would need to be put into the creation of such a workshop; issues such as which "expert material" be used, how to incorporate services specific to a certain population into an agency, and individual biases will have to be considered and dealt with. A very strong example of such a workshop is available at the Avenue Community Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity in Saskatoon (<http://www.avenuecommunitycentre.ca/res/W2W%20Workshop%20Manual1.pdf>).



Recommendation #3: Expansion of current domestic violence services to meet the needs of LGBTQ clients.

While some domestic violence services and individual practitioners already support clients who experience violence in LGBTQ relationships, very few agencies have services specifically for these clients. For gay men experiencing domestic violence in particular, there are virtually no programs in Ottawa that specifically support them. Current services need to be expanded to meet this need. There are some barriers that may arise, including lack of funding and a discomfort of some service providers in what they see as a move away from the violence against women movement.

Recommendation #4: Increased support of LGBTQ family organizations and events.

As one of the risks of children witnessing or experiencing violence in an LGBTQ-headed household is that they come to associate LGBTQ individuals and communities with violence, there needs to be positive examples of LGBTQ individuals, communities and families in particular. Organizations, programs and events such as Around the Rainbow, the Ten Oaks Project, Capital Pride and other LGBTQ family focused events needed to be more supported and promoted so that children see LGBTQ families represented in a positive way.

Recommendation #5: Further research on the effects of violence in LGBTQ relationships on children.

Currently, there is virtually no research in this area. In order to create or improve services for children witnessing or experiencing violence in a LGBTQ-headed household, more research about the specific needs and effects must be done.



Resources Available in Ottawa

Crisis Lines

- **Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre**
Strengths: Supports female clients who have experienced sexual assault perpetrated by another woman; supports transgender clients who identify as female; staff and volunteers receive training specifically about the issues LGBTQ women face.
Weaknesses: Deals only with sexual assault and not other forms of intimate partner and domestic violence; does not support male clients.
- **Distress Center**
Strengths: Supports clients who have experienced sexual assault and domestic violence in LGBTQ relationships.
Weaknesses: Provides crisis intervention only, not long-term support; no specific services for LGBTQ individuals.
- **Safe Shelters**
Strengths: Support female clients who have experienced violence in an LGBTQ relationship; most welcome children.
Weaknesses: Do not support male clients; may have a harder time identifying female abusers who locate the shelter; many do not provide specific services for LGBTQ individuals.

Police

- **GLBT Police Liaison Committee (Ottawa Police Service)**
Strengths: Acknowledges violence in LGBTQ relationships; hosted “Navigating the Ins and Outs of GLBTQ Partner Assault: an Information Exchange Between Police and Community” and published report on it; regularly holds/participates in community events.
Weaknesses: Focuses mainly on hate crime against the LGBTQ community by outside individuals – this is definitely needed but the effects of homophobia and heterosexism need to be applied to other experiences LGBTQ individuals have with crime, victimization and the law.



Counselling Services

- Family Services à la Famille Ottawa – Anti-Violence Program
Strengths: Support female clients and children who experience violence in an LGBTQ relationship; have specific programs for children around witnessing domestic violence; take clients from wide catchment area (women from small communities who don't want to out themselves by seeking services there can be served by FSO).
Weaknesses: Do not support male clients.
- New Directions (Catholic Family Services)
Strengths: Program for men who have been abusive to partners; have (at least in the past) group for men who were abusive to male partners; support victims at the same time.
Weaknesses: No program for women who have been abusive.
- Sexual Assault Support Centre
Strengths: Support female clients who experience violence in an LGBTQ relationship; have specific training and material around LGBTQ issues; deal with intersecting oppressions (race, socio-economic status, new to Canada, etc.).
Weaknesses: Do not support male clients.
- The Men's Project
Strengths: Support male clients who experience violence in LGBTQ relationships; support male clients who experienced violence as children; have produced information and public education pieces on violence in gay male relationships.
Weaknesses: Do not have a regular group for men experiencing violence in an LGBTQ relationship.
- Youth Services Bureau
Strengths: Provide counselling, a crisis line and wraparound support to youth experiencing violence in an LGBTQ relationship; have a youth advisory committee specifically for LGBTQ youth.
Weaknesses: No programs specifically for youth experiencing violence in an LGBTQ relationship.



Other

- Pink Triangle Services

Strengths: Entire service for youth and adults in LGBTQ communities; provide many peer support and social groups.

Weaknesses: Counselling and peer support specifically for those experiencing violence in an LGBTQ relationship not built into regular service.

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Violence in LGBTQ Families Research

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/16-Violence-in-LGBTQ-Families-Research.pdf>



Let People Be Who They Are

Gender independent children are individuals aged 1-12 whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not conform to traditional expectations of what it means to be a boy or a girl (such children may also be labeled as gender non-conforming or gender variant). The identification of gaps in service and care for these children is not a trend specific to the Ottawa region or to FSO (Mallon and DeCrescenzo, 2006); rather, it is becoming a growing area of concern for program providers and as such is an important area of study. The World Professional Organization for Transgender Health (WPATH) has recently updated their standards of care for professionals working with this population and have moved forward to include within their literature that participating in “reparative therapy” is no longer considered a “best practice”. Although this is a step forward, it leaves these questions: what are the best practices when working with this population, who are providing services to this population, and finally, which practitioners are employing the use of best practices?

Let People Be Who They Are Research

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/17-Let-People-Be-Who-They-Are-Research.pdf>

Queerspawn Experiences: Challenges and Needs of Youth and Young Adults from LGBTQ+ Families

Since 2008, FSO has been very fortunate to receive an endowed research fund from an anonymous donor to support research that will benefit the agency and its programs. In 2013, this endowment, the Stuart Peterson fund, was utilized to conduct research for the Around the Rainbow program. ATR was able to hire a former BSW practicum student who used the research grant to inform and enrich the work carried out by the ATR program. The central focus of the report was to explore the lived realities and experiences of youth and young adults ages 13-25 who have one or more LGBTQ+ identified parent.

The goal of this report is to outline and explore the challenges and needs faced by youth and young adults with LGBTQ+ identified parents, also called queerspawn. The term queerspawn is relatively new and sometimes contested, both within and outside the LGBTQ+ community. Not all those who grow up in LGBTQ+ families will identify with the term for a variety of different reasons; whether based on the use of the word queer, or the word spawn, or generally viewing the term as defining personal identity as an extension of a parent’s identity. As will be spoken to further in later sections of this report, the use of the

term queerspawn can also be conceptualized as a location of power and self-identification. It is important to note here that while not all children, youth, or young adults with one or more LGBTQ+ identified parents will identify with the term queerspawn, for others it offers language and context for their realities and experiences. This piece can be complex, and is largely based on self-identification. Throughout this report, we hope to draw attention and awareness to the specific challenges and needs of youth and young adult queerspawn. Finally, this report will offer recommendations as to how Family Services Ottawa can go about developing and implementing programs or services aimed to address the unique and diverse challenges and needs that have been found to affect this population.

Queerspawn Experiences Research

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/18-Queerspawn-Experiences-Research.pdf>





What has been said about the Around the Rainbow Program

ATR has received many words of support which help us to continue the work for families, individuals and communities. The following quotes are from a range of individuals and organizations including service providers who have received ATR training and education, community organizations that partner with ATR, FSO staff and parents and participants.

Service providers write:

- “The training our staff received from the Around the Rainbow public educator was fantastic! Not only did it provide us with tools and resources. It really influenced us to be more inclusive in our interactions with all of our clients and really educated us on LGBTTTQIA+ issues and challenges.”
- “I feel like it was one of the best trainings I have had in my career so far, it really impacted me and my practice – as a personal statement you can use if you wish.”
- “The Around the Rainbow program has been crucial in filling in gaps in service throughout the city, whether this has been through their LGBTQ+ family days or giving support to parents of gender-independent children. This is especially important since LGBTQ-focused organizations are already under-funded and understaffed as it is. The program has an additional benefit of being part of a larger organization not readily associated with LGBTQ rights and issues, giving parents (who need to be more discreet to protect their childrens' identities from unwelcome communities) a way to access resources and events without outing themselves.”
- “Working with the families that attend the art and play program run through Around the Rainbow has warmed my heart watching and hearing families and children comfortable and connecting in a safe space. The art and play programs are so important in order to allow our families to be supported and feel welcome, always. Such an incredible experience getting to know the families, children, parents, staff, and volunteers who attend the programs.”
- “The group for parents/guardians/care-givers of gender creative children run by the Around the Rainbow program is such an important one in Ottawa. It gives care-givers the space to ask all of the questions and express all of the emotions they're afraid of, as well as the tools to better support and advocate for their children.”
- “The training sessions Around the Rainbow runs for educators are invaluable: they provide an open, non-judgemental space for participants to learn how to better support the children and families they work with, and gently challenging everyone present to reflect on how they can be better allies for LGBTQ+ communities. LGBTQ+ kids and kids from LGBTQ+ families struggle so much in educational



systems because they don't see themselves represented and face tremendous discrimination and violence; Around the Rainbow is helping change the culture of these systems to become safer, celebratory spaces.”

- “As a social work student volunteering in the program, it is wonderful to be part of a space where rainbow/LGBTQ families feel at ease and can just have fun and play, connect and share experiences with each other. It gives a sense of empowerment and validation and I could see the need of the children and parents for resources and community in a program that brings them together in a relaxed and friendly environment.”
- “The Around the Rainbow program has been invaluable in helping various schools examine their own awareness about LGBTQ issues, in order to help foster more inclusive classroom environments. The program has also helped create a sense of community in establishing good relationships between parents, school, and Family Services Ottawa through the parent support group for trans, gender creative, gender independent children. Around the Rainbow has also helped support schools when a student is socially transitioning and requesting accommodations. We are so fortunate to have this unique program in Ottawa to help serve our community.”

An FSO staff member writes:

“What stands out when I think about the program is the deep sense of relief that there is support for individuals and families who often seem to suffer from the harmful effects of being judged, excluded, feared, disrespected, and mistreated just for who they are and who they love, however beautiful, however kind and generous. Clients who have attended support groups and picnics, have talked about how great it was to simply celebrate and connect with other families.

Community education, readings, research all serve to offering information that might bring new understanding, compassion, and dissolving of barriers to our coming together and seeing our differences as a tapestry of strengths that benefit us all. We are all mainstream. I believe when we free another to be themselves, and to love who they love, we free ourselves and true peace is possible.

Without a team willing to share information in schools and the wider community, to dispel myths, talk about human rights, to educate about more inclusive language in talking about gender identities, I'm not sure how our community would come to new understandings so that welcoming spaces for everyone can be created.

I am still learning and will keep learning about how to 'do' inclusivity, how to practice respectful dialogue when the going gets tough, how to step out of my comfort zone and face some blind spots, challenge biases, and make new friends. I



appreciate what programs like Around the Rainbow offer and how it has opened up our agency to take a stand on what we believed in, include everyone in service we offer, and make a workplace more welcoming for all staff.”

Parents write:

- “I do want to say how beneficial the parent meetings have been to my husband and myself. We were facing a very difficult and emotional time with our transgender teen. I can tell you, as a parent of a transgender person, it is an emotional roller coaster because on one hand you are so proud of your child for coming out and trying to become the person they want to be and suffering the loss of the child you expected to grow in a different way. We found parents with the same feelings of uncertainty we had and it was so reassuring to know we were not alone in this journey. Whenever we went to a parent meeting, we learned a lot from the hosts and from our fellow parents' experiences. We know this program for parents of transgender youth is vital. These kids are a vulnerable part of our community and support needs to be given starting from acceptance inside the home first.”
- “It is so important for transgender kids and their parents to know they are not alone. Something as simple as an art drop-in can feel like an incredible relief. We are very grateful for services like this in our community.”
- “The greatest joy I had, after returning to the city, was watching my daughter connect with other kids her age, just like her - playing at FSO functions hosted for our growing family group. To my mind, there is no greater gift to offer a community, than the opportunity to watch their children blossom with confidence and courage only true fellowship can provide.”
- “The parent support group at Family Services Ottawa marked a turning point in raising my emotional strength as a parent and contributed greatly, actually it was key, for me to be better prepared emotionally and be more effective at supporting my son through his transition. With the solidarity, advice and understanding of other parents, group facilitators and program leaders, every step of the way in our family journey has been easier, achievable, and more and more within our reach. These are people out there that truly care for and understand our children. When we thought that we were not making it to the next step, every day became easier knowing that true and honest sharing and respect were available. Transitions present many challenges, first to our children and also to families, and at every turn there could be a negative reaction, an obstacle waiting for our families. Parents groups help by knowing first hand that there are other families in similar situations, that we are not alone. That fact seems simple, but fighting isolation with true solidarity can represent the difference between a teenager that makes it through a transition and another one that may not make it due to depression or suicide.



- “Arts and play events have helped by giving an opportunity to my son to be out with other people for the first time in two years. He baked cookies and he shared and he was there, simply enjoying being in a group that does not judge him for who he is. Tears can come to my eyes remembering the times that my son actually agreed to come out and share his time with us and other families. This happened at the Arts and play event. The Around the Rainbow community developer and facilitators have been true leaders, facilitating, organizing, creating a simple and safe environment for us families and our children to simply be ourselves and be respected. I wish that the day will come when transgender children, youth and young adults feel safe enough to be themselves in any setting.”
- "The best part of the family support group, is that parents from all corners of this city can come together and learn from each other, connecting everyone to the best resources available to help their kids, who get. There is nothing more important to community than connecting people - so I am grateful that Family Services Ottawa has stepped up to provide the spaces to accomplish these little miracles."
- “I’ve been to this support group 3 times. I’d like to share a few words about the benefit to me. I am the mother of a 24 year old transgender female. The first time I attended the support group, I was very sad and confused about my child. Within the first hour of the meeting, I felt as if I wasn’t alone, and what I was feeling was perfectly normal. It was wonderful to be able to talk about my child, with such a supportive group of parents. When I returned for the second time, I could see new members with the same pain and confusion on their faces. I was glad to be able to share my experience with them, and see that they too started to come out of the fog.”
- "There are many parenting moments when one feels alone and lost, without a clue where to turn or what to do next. I cannot describe the relief I felt to hear other parents coping with the same things as our family - we learned we were not alone. FSO made that possible."
- “I work for the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) as a Clinical Specialist in Mental Health and Addictions. But more importantly I am the parent of a Trans youth...well she would remind me that she is now 18! She has struggled with her mental health as she walks the difficult road carved out before her. Working at CIHI I am familiar with the importance of data as evidence...A report released in October 2012 by the Toronto Children's Aid Society and Youth Services speaks to the health impacts of parental support for trans youth and the implications for all those working with them.”
- “The findings draw a direct relationship between strong parental support and the reduction of significant risk factors for trans youth – in particular depression and suicide attempts. The report highlights the urgent need for policy-makers to



familiarize themselves with the needs of trans youth, and to respond with resources.”

- “As a parent journeying with my child...It is difficult to put into words the importance of Around the Rainbow programs that provide support to parents so that we can provide support to our children. These programs are beacons of light on a very lonely, perplexing road.”
- “The workers in these programs listen to and answer our many questions; they are accessible, respectful, patient, and empathetic. They have been our teachers and perhaps, in a way, we (parents and children/youth) have been theirs...As they have listened and responded to our many needs. Thank you!!”

Facilitators of the parent support group for gender creative and trans children and youth write:

- “Thank you for including me in this early stage of developing a support group for parents of Gender Creative children. I enjoyed meeting these courageous parents who were so articulate about what they needed in order to feel supported. I was struck by this intelligent, energized group of parents who so clearly understood what they needed in order to best support their children and themselves in what appears to be an evolving journey for all. I was also struck by their intense desire to reach out to others to share information and knowledge so that other parents would not have to go through the isolation, worry and uncertainty that they had experienced themselves. I wish you all the best as you move forward in this important work.”
- “We do it for the kids but we are aware that the impacts are healing for whole communities. We know if we can support the parents in responding in love and acceptance through this experience, that we are creating safer spaces for the little ones. And we know we have the opportunity to build resilience in these children and their future communities by helping create solid foundations in their homes. We are helping heal communities when we support these families.”
- “The moments that touch me the most are when the toughest dads become the gender-creative kids biggest allies and their strongest cheerleaders. I watch this experience soften them and in turn, seeing that, it softens me and gives me hope.”
- “The ATR program is very beneficial. It’s wonderful having a program in the community present to support the Gender Creative Kids and their families that we see in the Gender Diversity clinic at CHEO. Often the families we see feel so isolated and alone, ATR does a magnificent job at eliminating those feelings that many

families may be living. Families certainly appreciate ATR, not a week goes by without hearing a family express their gratitude for the Family Support Group, the Art and Play program or mention of the various organized activities.”

- “ATR has also been a great support to the Diversity Clinic, as we’ve had the chance to collaborate to educate and raise awareness in many schools in the Ottawa region. These presentations for school staff are a great learning opportunity and a wonderful way to eliminate stigma that surrounds Gender Creative Kids.”
- “I’d like to specifically mention how amazing the Parent Support Group has been for families. As previously mentioned many of these families feel isolated, this group gives them a forum to not feel alone, to realize they have a group they can bounce ideas and emotions off of in a safe space. I’m very proud to be a part of this group, seeing families out of hospital offices is a magnificent way to get to know the families we work with and how we can better support them.”
- “I cannot emphasize enough how important ATR is for the families I see in the Gender Diversity clinic. These families need this kind of program in their community and we are fortunate enough to have a presence like this in Ottawa.”





AROUND THE RAINBOW – LOOKING FORWARD

The ATR program has strong momentum and is focused on long-term sustainability and growth. The program that began as a three-year project in 2005 has grown and evolved along with LGBTTTQ+ families in our community. ATR has expanded to include a wide range of services including public education, training, advocacy, transition planning support for gender creative and trans youth, a support group for parents of gender creative, trans children and youth, art and play groups for LGBTTTQ+ families, new partnerships with main stream organizations (e.g. school board, children's hospital, early years centres), counselling for LGBTTTQ+ adults and research about the needs of LGBTTTQ+ families. Internally to FSO, the program is more fully integrated into the broader agency delivery system and is considered a core program, no longer just a project.

As our LGBTTTQ+ communities have changed, the demand for the ATR programs has grown to the point where the demand on the ATR program is higher than the current resources. FSO takes its commitment to providing current, effective and diverse services for LGBTTTQ+ families very seriously. FSO continues to seek the resources required to expand the program in order to meet the needs of LGBTTTQ+ individuals and families and families with gender creative and trans children and youth through direct service delivery as well as specific education, training and resources.

From our vantage point at the end of 2014, we envision an Around the Rainbow program that will:

- Continue to expand to meet the needs of families around gender and gender identity;
- Develop new ways to support LGBTTTQ+ headed families and to reach families not typically involved in LGBTTTQ+ communities;
- Work with others to support LGBTTTQ+ families from diverse newcomer communities;
- Expand our work with schools to support transitioning students;
- Provide a wider range of supports to LGBTTTQ+ families including social events, peer support, counselling;
- Continue to tailor public education and training to the needs of a diverse range of organizations;
- Deliver training and public education differently – meet with smaller staff groups, meet with agencies more than once, divide the training into shorter sessions;
- Integrate an LGBTTTQ+ lens into all FSO programming; enhance all program areas to serve LGBTTTQ+ families and individuals;



- Work with new community partners to deliver our programs and services;
- Expand our counselling services for LGBTTTQ+ individuals and families;
- Explore and develop programs that meet the intersecting needs of LGBTTTQ+ families.

In order to achieve the above goals, we will work towards expanding our ATR community and counselling staff teams.

For the community team, we will work to include:

- a rainbow families art and play coordinator;
- an LGBTTTQ+ families community educator;
- a gender creative and trans children and youth community educator;

For the counselling team, we will work to include:

- a counsellor for families with children aged 3-12;
- a counsellor for families with youth aged 12-18;
- a counsellor for adults 18+ focused on the specialization areas of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.





APPENDICES

A- Job descriptions (Around the Rainbow job descriptions from 2005 – 2014)

“Coordinator, Community Development for Rainbow Families”

Job Title:	Coordinator, Community Development for Rainbow Families
Program Area:	Community Programs
Status:	35 hours per week (1.0 FTE)
Classification:	Level 6
Union/Non-union:	Union
Reports to:	Director, Community Programs
Location:	Main office, on-site locations

Job Summary

Working in partnership with the community developer, and under the advice of a community advisory committee, the Coordinator develops and implements a model of community development and popular education in order to decrease the isolation and homophobia experienced by glbtq parents and their children ages 0-6.

Responsibilities and Duties

1. Program Planning

- 1.1. Maintains and coordinates annual program plan for project, as approved by SDPP
- 1.2. Consults with community service providers, parents, and others to ensure coordinated service development and delivery
- 1.3. Develops and maintains plans for web site, evaluation, and community-based popular education and advocacy projects
- 1.4. Working with community developer, reaches out to new communities and new venues to plan service
- 1.5. Supports project advisory committee to ensure high-quality and coordinated delivery of project
- 1.6. Supports rainbow families coalition to facilitate coalition development

2. Program delivery

- 2.1. Tool kit development (year 1)
 - 2.1.1. Coordinates and facilitates roundtable processes to develop three toolkits:
 - 2.1.1.1. for GLBT parents – describing children’s experiences, needs, and rights in the school, preschool and community settings regarding



- harassment, homophobia, and bullying; and educating parents about how they can support their children
 - 2.1.1.2. for GLBT families – to help build parent support groups, networks and resources in their schools and communities
 - 2.1.1.3. for preschool educators, care providers, early years centres, and school boards – to inform about the experiences, needs, and rights of children from GLBT families, and provide specific resource suggestions for celebrating and including the broader diversity of families in these settings
 - 2.1.2. Coordinates RFP process to procure a graphic designer for design, editing, layout and printing of toolkits
 - 2.2. Community Training and Information Sessions (years 2 and 3)
 - 2.2.1. Develops and delivers train-the-trainer model to share contents of each of the toolkits
 - 2.2.2. Recruits and trains community volunteers as trainers
 - 2.2.3. Coordinates and facilitates training workshops throughout the community
 - 2.3. Develops a working model of rainbow families coalition (years 1,2, and 3)
 - 2.3.1. Facilitates and coordinates the Rainbow Families Coalition
 - 2.3.2. Works with the coalition to develop a model, terms of reference, and suggested models of working that could be transferred to other communities in Canada
 - 2.4. Coordinates a series of neighbourhood-based advocacy and popular education projects
 - 2.4.1. Works with the community developer to outreach to GLBT families with children 0-6 and organizations (GLBT service providers, mainstream service providers, EYCs, nursery schools, child care centres, and elementary schools)
 - 2.4.2. Works with community developer and community artist to plan and implement a series of community-based arts projects celebrating diverse families (years 2 and 3)
 - 2.4.3. Works with community developer and artist to create photo exhibit/video montage of neighbourhood-based arts activities
 - 2.5. Web site design
 - 2.5.1. Coordinates RFP process to procure a web site designer for the duration of the project
 - 2.5.2. Coordinates design and continuous updating of interactive web site for children, parents, and service providers (years 1 – 3)
 - 2.6. Designs and implements community symposium (year 3)
- 3. Program evaluation**
- 3.1. Plans and coordinates RFP process for evaluating the project in years 1 and 3
 - 3.2. Works closely with the evaluator to develop pre-test/post-test results-based reporting design for project (methods may include environmental scan of resources and attitudes; key informant interviews; roundtable dialogues; tracking of participation; tracking of web site hits; etc)
 - 3.3. Implements the evaluation plan, under the advice of the evaluator



4. Administration

- 4.1. Maintains accurate records and statistical data as required by the agency and the funder.
- 4.2. Supervises student placements on occasion.
- 4.3. Prepares correspondence as required.
- 4.4. Prepares project reports, under direction of manager

5. Support work

- 5.1. Attends advisory committee, rainbow family coalition, community program team meetings, and FSFO staff meetings.
- 5.2. Responds to PR requests
- 5.3. Represents the agency on community committees at public relations events as required by the agency.

6. Other duties

- 6.1. As assigned by the Program Director.

Job Specifications (Qualifications)

- MSW in relevant field, or equivalent combination of education and work experience
- A minimum of five (5) years related experience
- Demonstrated knowledge and practice skills in project coordination, community development and family life education and support
- Strong organizational and planning skills
- Ability to set goals and prioritize among multiple tasks
- Strong initiative and good judgement
- Ability to work as a collaborative team member
- Familiarity and sensitivity to the unique challenges facing GLBTQ parents and their children
- Demonstrated ability to work in partnership with the GLBTQ community and mainstream organizations
- Demonstrated comfort in working in collaborative GLBTQ-mainstream environments
- Expertise with MS word, Word Perfect, and email programs
- Excellent interpersonal skills; skilled at building rapport
- Demonstrated skills at conflict resolution
- Knowledge of preschool and early childhood age child development
- Understanding of early childhood and school-age curricula



Terms and Conditions

1. Evening and weekend work required
2. Must pass criminal reference check
3. Bilingualism an asset
4. Extensive local travel required

Coordinator, Community Development Job Description

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/19-Coordinator-Job-Description.pdf>

“Community Developer, Community Development for Rainbow Families”

Job Title: Community Developer, Community Development for Rainbow Families
Program Area: Community Programs
Status: 35 hours per week (1.0 FTE)
Classification: Level 5
Union/Non-union: Union
Reports to: Director, Community Programs
Location: Main office, on-site locations

Job Summary

Working in partnership with the project coordinator, and under the advice of a community advisory committee, the Community Developer will help to develop a model of community development and popular education to help decrease the isolation and homophobia experienced by children (ages 0-6) of GLBTTQ families.

Responsibilities and Duties

1. Program Planning

- 1.1. Develops and maintains plans for community and site outreach
- 1.2. Develops and maintains plans for the development of project toolkits
- 1.3. Provides information to project advisory committee and project coordinator as required.



2. Program delivery

2.1. Tool kit development (year 1)

2.1.1. Working with the project coordinator, participates in the coordination of roundtable processes to collect information to develop three toolkits:

2.1.1.1. for GLBT parents – describing children’s experiences, needs, and rights in the school, preschool and community settings regarding harassment, homophobia, and bullying; and educating parents about how they can support their children

2.1.1.2. for GLBT families – to help build parent support groups, networks and resources in their schools and communities

2.1.1.3. for preschool educators, care providers, early years centres, and school boards – to inform about the experiences, needs, and rights of children from GLBT families, and provide specific resource suggestions for celebrating and including the broader diversity of families in these settings

2.1.2. Reviews research and resources developed by other organizations for purposes of toolkits

2.1.3. Writes toolkits for service providers and for parents.

2.1.4. Working with the project coordinator, coordinates pilot testing of toolkits with reference groups, as required.

2.2. Community Training and Information Sessions (years 2 and 3)

2.2.1. Working with the project coordinator, develops and delivers train-the-trainer model to share contents of each of the toolkits

2.2.2. Working with the project coordinator, recruits and trains community volunteers as trainers

2.2.3. Coordinates and facilitates training workshops throughout the community

2.3. Coordinates a series of neighbourhood-based advocacy and popular education projects

2.3.1. Works with the project coordinator to outreach to GLBT families with children 0-6 and organizations (GLBT service providers, mainstream service providers, EYCs, nursery schools, child care centres, and elementary schools)

2.3.2. Works with project coordinator and community artist to plan and implement a series of community-based arts projects celebrating diverse families (years 2 and 3)

2.3.3. Works with project coordinator and artist to create photo exhibit/video montage of neighbourhood-based arts activities

2.4. Web site design

2.4.1. Working with the project coordinator, provides information for continuous updating of interactive web site for children, parents, and service providers (years 1 – 3)

2.5. Working with the project coordinator, designs and implements community symposium (year 3)

3. Program evaluation

3.1. Outreaches to sites, implements data collection, and collects information as required by project coordinator for evaluating the project in years 1 and 3



4. Administration

- 4.1. Maintains accurate records and statistical data as required by the agency and the funder.
- 4.2. Supervises student placements on occasion.
- 4.3. Prepares correspondence as required.
- 4.4. Prepares project reports, under direction of manager

5. Support work

- 5.1. Attends advisory committee, rainbow family coalition, community program team meetings, and FSFO staff meetings.
- 5.2. Represents the agency on community committees at public relations events as required by the agency.

6. Other duties

- 6.1. As assigned by the Program Director.

Job Specifications (Qualifications)

- BA in relevant field, or equivalent combination of education and work experience
- A minimum of four (4) years related experience
- Demonstrated knowledge and practice skills in
 - community development ,understanding family life education and support, and experience working with a school system
 - symposium organization
 - outreach
 - adult training
- Strong organizational and planning skills
- Ability to set goals and prioritize among multiple tasks
- Strong initiative and good judgement
- Ability to work as a collaborative team member
- Familiarity and sensitivity to the unique challenges facing GLBTTQ parents and their children
- Demonstrated ability to work in partnership with the GLBTTQ community and mainstream organizations
- Expertise with MS word, Word Perfect, and email programs
- Excellent interpersonal skills; skilled at building rapport
- Demonstrated skills at conflict resolution
- Knowledge of preschool and early childhood age child development
- Understanding of early childhood and school-age curricula



Terms and Conditions

5. Regular evening and weekend work required
6. Bilingualism an asset
7. Extensive local travel required

Coordinator, Community Developer Job Description
<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/20-Community-Developer-Job-Description.pdf>

“Community Artist, Around the Rainbow project”

Job Title: Community Artist
Program Area: Around the Rainbow Project, Community Programs
Status: Contract
Classification: Level 3
Union/Non-union: Union
Reports to: Director, Community Programs
Location of Work: Community sites
Hours of work: Fourteen hours per week

Job Summary

Working in collaboration with the community developer and project coordinator, the community artist develops and coordinates art projects for the Around the Rainbow project. S/he generates ideas and creates projects specific to each participating site; liaises with artists, identifies and purchases materials, and delivers arts events.

Responsibilities and Duties

- 1. Generate ideas for site-specific collaborative community arts projects**
 - 1.1.1. Brainstorms with community developer and project coordinator
 - 1.1.2. Identifies materials required for projects
- 2. Plans and delivers community-based community arts projects**
 - 2.1.1. Liaises with artists contracted to do projects
 - 2.1.2. Delivers projects with families and educators at project sites
- 3. Administration**
 - 3.1.1. Purchases supplies (coffee, tea, paints, canvases, brushes, etc) within pre-approved budget.



- 3.1.2. Manages petty cash
- 4. Support**
 - 4.1.1. Attends project team meetings as required
- 5. Other duties**
 - 5.1.1. As assigned by the Program Director.

Job Specifications (Qualifications)

- 1. Education**
 - 1.1. Diploma in related field
- 2. Experience**
 - 2.1. At least two years of experience as a working artist
 - 2.2. At least two years experience coordinating community arts events
- 3. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**
 - 3.1. Knowledge of art supplies and techniques appropriate to collaborative community art
 - 3.2. Demonstrated skill at implementing community-based art projects
 - 3.3. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
 - 3.4. Ability to work creatively and collaboratively
 - 3.5. Ability to work as part of a team
 - 3.6. Strong organization and planning skills
 - 3.7. Sensitivity to the challenges facing GLBTTQ parents and their children

Terms and Conditions

- 1. Evening and weekend work required
- 2. Must pass criminal reference check

Community Artist Job Description

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/21-Artist-Job-Description.pdf>



B- Language

Numerous LGBTTTQ+ glossary of terms can be accessed online. ATR chose the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Positive Spaces Initiative (PSI) and the National Center for Transgender Equality glossary to highlight as well as a sample of web links.

From the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Positive Spaces Initiative (PSI):

- Positive Space Initiative Starter kit
[http://www.positivespaces.ca/sites/positivespaces.ca/files/OCASI Positive Spaces Starter Kit 2014.pdf](http://www.positivespaces.ca/sites/positivespaces.ca/files/OCASI%20Positive%20Spaces%20Starter%20Kit%202014.pdf)
- Glossary of Terms
[http://www.positivespaces.ca/sites/positivespaces.ca/files/Glossary of Terms.pdf](http://www.positivespaces.ca/sites/positivespaces.ca/files/Glossary%20of%20Terms.pdf)

From the National Center for Transgender Equality:

- Transgender Terminology
http://transequality.org/Resources/TransTerminology_2014.pdf

Examples of other online LGBTTTQ+ glossary of terms:

- Glossary for understanding gender identity and expression:
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/appendix-b-glossary-understanding-gender-identity-and-expression>
- Queer Terminology-from A to Q:
<http://www.qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Queer-Terminology-Web-Version-Sept-2013.pdf>
- Know Your Rights-LGBTQ Teens & Young Adults:
<http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/glossary-lgbtq-terms>



- An Ally's Guide to Terminology:
<http://www.lgbtmap.org/file/allys-guide-to-terminology.pdf>
- Fenway Health:
http://www.fenwayhealth.org/site/DocServer/Handout_7-C_Glossary_of_Gender_and_Transgender_Terms__fi.pdf
- Glossary of human rights terms:
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/teaching-human-rights-ontario-guide-ontario-schools/appendix-1-glossary-human-rights-terms>
- LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary:
<http://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/lgbt-education/lgbtqia-glossary>
- ILGA-Europe Glossary:
<http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/publications/glossary>
- Positive Space:
<https://www2.viu.ca/positivespace/manual/glossary.asp>
- Glossary of Trans and LGBT terms:
<http://www.gendernetwork.com/glossary.html>
- Glossary of LGBT terminology:
<http://pflagalamance.org/2014/02/21/glossery-of-lgbt-terminology-you-might-not-know-all-of-these/>
- Glossary of Terms:
<https://lgbt.ucsf.edu/glossary-terms>
- Researching for LGBTQ Health-Community:
<http://lgbtqhealth.ca/community/>
- Resources-Glossary of Terms:
<http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/glossary-of-terms>
- Comprehensive List of LGBTQ+ Term Definitions:
<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/>



- John Hopkins University-LGBT Glossary:
<http://web.jhu.edu/LGBTQ/glossary.html>
- PFLAG Canada-Glossary:
<https://www.pflagcanada.ca/en/glossary-e.html>
- LGBT Terms and Definitions:
<http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>
LGBTQI Terminology
- Gender Equity Resource Center-Definitions of Terms:
http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definiton_of_terms
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide-Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Glossary of Terms:
<http://www.glaad.org/reference/lgb>
- Asexual Advice-Glossary:
<http://asexualadvice.tumblr.com/glossary>
- PFLAG Atlanta-LGBT Glossary:
<http://www.pflagatl.org/lgbt-glossary/>
- Lets Talk LGBT-Terms to Use: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender:
<http://letstalklgbt.org/media-toolkit/glossary/>
- The Center-About Gender Identity:
<https://gaycenter.org/wellness/gender-identity>
- Teaching Tolerance-A Gender Spectrum Glossary:
<http://www.tolerance.org/LGBT-best-practices-terms>
- Here to Help-LGBT Glossary;
<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/lgbt-vol6/glossary>
- We Are Family-Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Glossary of Terms:
<http://www.wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-a-z-glossary/>



- Trans, Genderqueer, and Queer Terms Glossary:
http://lgbt.wisc.edu/documents/Trans_and_queer_glossary.pdf
- LGBT Glossary:
<http://www.inotherwords-project.eu/content/project/media-analysis/terminology/glossary-lgbt>
- Fantasia Fair-Glossary of Terms: A Glossary of LGBT- related Terms:
http://www.fantasiafair.org/Glossary_of_Terms.aspx
- CUSU LGBT+ Glossary:
<http://www.lgbt.cusu.cam.ac.uk/resources/trans/glossary/>
- Scouts Pride-Glossary of LGBT Terms:
<http://scoutpride.org/Glossary.html>
- LGBT Resource Center-Terminology and Definitions:
<http://www.uccs.edu/lgbtresourcecenter/terminology-and-definitions.html>
- Outreach Youth-Common LGBTQ Terms:
<http://www.outreachyouth.org.uk/files/Outreach - Common LGBTQ terms.pdf>
- LGBT Terminology & Cultural Information:
<https://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/CounselingCenter/PDFs/SAFEZONE Out At Work/LGBT Terminology and Cultural Informantion.pdf>
- Genderqueer Identities:
<http://genderqueerid.com/gq-terms>



C- Resources

**24 GLBTTQ Youth Ottawa Resource: Ottawa Resource
List for GLBTTQ Youth**

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/24-GLBTTQ-Youth-Ottawa-Resource.pdf>

**25 Booklist OPL: A sample of OPL's Collection of
teen books with LGBTQ themes**

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/25-Booklist-OPL.pdf>

26 Book Collection OCDSB: LGBTQ+ Book Collection

<https://familyservicesottawa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/26-Book-Collection-OCDSB.pdf>

- The LGBTQ Parenting Network is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto. They work with individuals, organization, and communities from the local to the international. <http://lgbtqpn.ca/>
- PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to anyone with questions or concerns. <http://www.pflagcanada.ca/en/index.html>



Resources specific to supporting a student's social transitioning plan which ATR relies on in educational trainings:

Link to information about the Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Students in K-12 Schools:

- Canadian Teachers' Federation: New teacher resource aims to support transgender and transsexual students:
<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/news/Pages/default.aspx?newsid=1983984754&year=2012>
- Supporting Transgender and Transsexual: Students in K-12 Schools:
<http://gendercreativekids.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Supporting-Transgender-and-Transsexual-Students-web.pdf>

Transition Options for Gender Independent Children and Adolescents

- Rainbow Health Ontario Resources:
<http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/gender-independent-kids-series-2/>

The Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13) September 1, 2012

- 2014-15 Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools:
<http://www.etfo.ca/AdviceForMembers/PRSMattersBulletins/Pages/Bill%2013%20-%20Accepting%20Schools%20Act.aspx>
- Creating Safe and Accepting Schools: Information for Parents about the Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13):
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/SafeAccepSchools.pdf>
- Canada Education: After the Happily Ever After
<http://www.cca-ace.ca/education-canada/article/after-happily-ever-after>

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC)

- Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression:
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression>
- Gender Identity:
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/tag/code-grounds/gender-identity>

Impacts of Strong Parental Support for Trans Youth

- Impacts of Strong Parental Support for Trans Youth
<http://transpulseproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Impacts-of-Strong-Parental-Support-for-Trans-Youth-vFINAL.pdf>

The Transgender Child

- Amazon: The Transgender Child Handbook
<http://www.amazon.ca/The-Transgender-Child-Handbook-Professionals/dp/1573443182>





