

2SLGBTQ+ Positive Space Assessment

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Introduction

Providing an environment that is inclusive of diversity and free of discrimination is critical to providing our clients equitable access to clinical services. 2SLGBTQ+ people have many of the same health concerns as anyone else, but cultural differences and the impact of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and systemic discrimination mean that these health needs may be experienced quite differently¹.

The mental health of 2SLGBTQ people is negatively affected by accumulated stigma, prejudice and discrimination, leading to higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicide than found in the general population².

To assess how well programs within the Mood and Anxiety Portfolio of the Mental Health and Addictions Program serve 2SLGBTQ+ clients, we modified an assessment called “A Positive Space is a Healthy Place” created by the Ontario Public Health Association³. This assessment tool was developed for use in Ontario Public Health Departments and Community Health Centres, so it was adapted to fit our hospital-based setting.

The modified assessment covers the following components:

- A. Governance
- B. Policy
- C. Program Management
- D. Program
- E. Confidentiality and Documentation
- F. Service Provider Competencies
- G. Physical Environment

The findings of the assessments are intended to be summarized through a report card, accompanied by recommendations that could include staff training, documentation and policy/procedure changes, as well as changes to physical spaces.

¹ Rainbow Health Ontario, www.rainbowhealthontario.ca

² Rainbow Health Ontario, www.rainbowhealthontario.ca

³ www.positivespaces.ca/toolkit/psi-manuals/positive-space-healthy-place-opha-manual

2SLGBTQ+ Positive Space Workplace Assessment Tool

A. Governance

This section should be completed once, at the level of the entire organization.

Organization Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale:

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all true	Slightly true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Very much true

Score

1. There are “out” 2SLGBTQ+ Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team Members. <i>Comments:</i>	
2. 2SLGBTQ+ members are actively recruited by the Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team. <i>Comments:</i>	
3. The organization has an anti-discrimination statement that is visibly posted in all areas of the workplace, stating that equal care will be provided to all, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, physical ability or attributes, religion, sexual identity, and gender identity. <i>Comments:</i>	
4. Members of the Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team are encouraged to participate in training on 2SLGBTQ+ issues to enhance their knowledge of these communities. This training should include an intersectional approach that recognizes the different experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people who are additionally marginalized due to race, ability, class, income, etc. <i>Comments:</i>	
5. The Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team consult with stakeholders in the 2SLGBTQ+ community during strategic planning. <i>Comments:</i>	
6. The Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team advocates on equity issues on behalf of 2SLGBTQ+ communities. <i>Comments:</i>	
7. The Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team has a process that informs Board members of any employee and client complaints related to discrimination/ harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity. <i>Comments:</i>	

Overall comments in this section:
Strengths in this section:
Priority areas for attention:
Recommendations and resources:

B. Policies

This section should be completed once, at the level of the entire organization.

Organization Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale: **0** **1** **2** **3** **4**
 Not at all true Slightly true Somewhat true Mostly true Very much true
Score

1. Human Resources policies and practices comply with the Canadian and provincial human rights code. <i>Comments:</i>	
2. The organization has clear written procedures and practices to deal with incidents of homophobia, biphobia or transphobia. <i>Comments:</i>	
3. The organization advertises employment opportunities in 2SLGBTQ+ media and through information networks or organizations representing 2SLGBTQ+ people. <i>Comments:</i>	
4. "Out" 2SLGBTQ+ staff are employed at all levels of the organization and reflect a diverse representation of experience (eg across race, ability, class, income, etc). <i>Comments:</i>	
5. The organization has clearly written anti-discrimination and harassment policies that explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity. <i>Comments:</i>	
6. 2SLGBTQ+ positive skills and competencies are included in all job performance evaluations. <i>Comments:</i>	
7. The organization provides all staff, including The Board of Governors or Senior Leadership Team members, with 2SLGBTQ+ positive space training. <i>Comments:</i>	
8. The organization has a clear policy statement that encourages inclusive language, behaviours or practices related to sexual orientation and gender identity. <i>Comments:</i>	
9. The organization includes articles about 2SLGBTQ+ issues, events, and programs in its newsletters, reports, social media, and other communications. <i>Comments:</i>	
10. The organization participates in community networks/coalitions as an advocate for 2SLGBTQ+ rights and concerns. <i>Comments:</i>	

Overall comments in this section:

Strengths in this section:

Priority areas for attention:
Recommendations and resources:

C. Program Management

This section should be completed once per program in the organization.

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale: **0** **1** **2** **3** **4**
 Not at all true Slightly true Somewhat true Mostly true Very much true
Score

1. The program has “openly out” 2SLGBTQ+ managers, supervisors, staff, physicians, and learners. (<i>The manager can name openly out staff.</i>) <i>Comments:</i>	
2. ASK IF YES TO QUESTION 1 ABOVE: The program creates a safe and supportive environment for 2SLGBTQ+ staff. This includes learning from their expertise to enhance the program’s ability to serve 2SLGBTQ+ clients, without the staff being stereotyped as “one-issue” people. (<i>The manager can provide examples of how 2SLGBTQ+ staff have been consulted</i>).	
3. The program manager ensures staff are implementing the organization’s mission and value statements related to diversity—including sexual orientation and gender identity—regardless of the personal values and beliefs of staff. (<i>The manager connects the mission of the Sisters of St Joseph to valuing diversity and supporting marginalized populations</i>). <i>Comments:</i>	
4. The program manager role models the use of inclusive language, behaviours and practices related to both sexual orientation and gender identity. (<i>The manager doesn’t assume opposite gender of spouses/family members, knows about asking about pronouns, is comfortable using words like 2SLGBTQ+</i>). <i>Comments:</i>	
5. The program is responsive to the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ clients during program planning, and recognizes the need for the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ clients into existing mainstream services as well as the need for exclusive 2SLGBTQ+ programs. (<i>The manager ensures that all programming is 2SLGBTQ+ but is also aware that some 2SLGBTQ+ people will prefer to receive services for 2SLGBTQ+ people only</i>). <i>Comments:</i>	
6. The program knows how to connect trans clients with trans-affirming healthcare. (<i>Manager is aware of local resources like Trans Health Coalition, Trans Health Network, local gender identity clinics, Kyle’s Place, as well as RHO, etc</i>) <i>Comments:</i>	
7. The program has resources available to staff, clients, and family members about Standards of Care for the provision of trans-affirming healthcare. (<i>The manager knows about WPATH’s standards of care, CPATH, and the Sherbourne Guidelines for Primary Care, and resources for family members</i>). <i>Comments:</i>	
8. The program consults with 2SLGBTQ+ community members about the types of services they need the program to provide. (<i>The manager can give examples of times they have consulted with 2SLGBTQ+ community members and/or advocacy groups</i>). <i>Comments:</i>	
9. The program manager has links and contacts on 2SLGBTQ+ issues both within the organization and with community partners.	

<i>(The manager can give examples of links and contacts such as the Trans Health Coalition, the Queer & Trans Youth Collaborative, Spectrum, Rainbow Health Ontario)</i> Comments:	
10. The program manager has been provided with 2SLGBTQ+ positive space training, and knows how to work with 2SLGBTQ+ community organizations. <i>(Part marks can be given for general ARAO/EDI training that includes 2SLGBTQ+ issues).</i> Comments:	
11. The program has openly out 2SLGBTQ+ clients and family members. <i>(The manager can list openly out clients and family members.)</i> Comments:	

Overall comments in this section:
Strengths in this section:
Priority areas for attention:
Recommendations and resources:

D. Program

This section should be completed once per program in the organization.

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale: **0** **1** **2** **3** **4**

Not at all true Slightly true Somewhat true Mostly true Very much true

Score

1. The program values prior positive space training and skills/experience working with 2SLGBTQ+ clients as criteria for working there. <i>(The manager can give examples like specific interview questions, or required training.)</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
2. All interview tools include questions to assess staff competency working with issues of ARAO (Anti Racism and Anti Oppression), equity, diversity, and inclusion, including 2SLGBTQ+ issues. <i>Comments:</i>	
3. The program recognizes, supports and acknowledges staff members who are actively demonstrating skills and competency working with 2SLGBTQ+ clients in their practice. <i>(The manager can give examples of times they have done this.)</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
4. The program provides all staff with positive space and ARAO training to work effectively with 2SLGBTQ+ staff, clients, family members, and community partners. <i>(The manager can give dates of recent training.)</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
5. Learners placed with the program have the opportunity to learn about 2SLGBTQ+ related issues. <i>(The manager can point to resources available at the program, & give eggs of opportunities).</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
6. Promotional materials for program services are 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive, and are advertised through external 2SLGBTQ+ organizations and networks. <i>(The manager can give show examples, and lists local networks like the Trans Health Network, the Queer & Trans Youth Collaborative, Kyle's Place.)</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
7. The program has a list of 2SLGBTQ+ resources that is kept up to date and used by staff. This list should include trans-positive healthcare and 2SLGBTQ+-specific programs and services. <i>Comments:</i>	
8. The program participates in community networks/coalitions to strengthen and integrate services available to members of 2SLGBTQ+ communities. <i>(like the Trans Health Network, the Queer & Trans Youth Collaborative)</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
9. The program uses the expertise of 2SLGBTQ+ community members to plan, deliver and evaluate programs and services, particularly those services developed for 2SLGBTQ+ communities. <i>Comments:</i>	

Overall comments in this section:

Strengths in this section:

Priority areas for attention:

Recommendations and resources:

E. Confidentiality and Documentation

This section should be completed once per program in the organization.

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale: **0** **1** **2** **3** **4**
 Not at all true Slightly true Somewhat true Mostly true Very much true
Score

1. Staff explain to clients how their confidentiality will be protected and who will have access to their personal health information. <i>(This is especially important for 2SLGBTQ+ people who might not be out to family members and/or to other health professionals like their GP.)</i> Comments:	IP
2. Staff give the option of not answering a question if confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, or if the client does not wish to respond. <i>(This is especially important for 2SLGBTQ+ people who might not be out to family members and/or to other health professionals like their GP.)</i> Comments:	IP
3. Staff are explicit about how sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual behaviour will be documented. <i>(This should all be done using non-judgemental, inclusive language, and include a discussion of pronouns).</i> Comments:	IP
4. Staff have the information they need to provide appropriate, safe, and confidential care to youth. <i>(Staff should be aware of youth's rights to privacy and confidentiality even concerning their parents/guardians as long as they are capable of making consent decisions.)</i> Comments:	IP
5. Referral, intake, and consent forms include an explanation about how confidentiality will be protected and who has access to health records. Comments:	IP
6. All referral forms, hard copy documentation, and electronic documentation provide for inclusive self-identification in all categories of gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/partnership status, family status, the client's name and pronouns. Comments:	IP
7. The referral/intake processes offer clients the opportunity to discuss concerns or questions with the referral/intake processes. Comments:	IP
8. Questions about families are inclusive of same-sex parents or more than two parents. Comments:	IP

Overall comments in this section:

Strengths in this section:
Priority areas for attention:
Recommendations and resources:

F. Service Provider Competencies

This section should be completed once per program in the organization. Individual service providers may also want to use this section individually, to monitor their own competency level.

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale: **0** **1** **2** **3** **4**

Not at all true Slightly true Somewhat true Mostly true Very much true

Score

1. Service providers have spent time educating themselves and keeping up-to-date with 2SLGBTQ+-related issues relevant to their practice, including attending 2SLGBTQ+ positive space training that they update regularly, and being aware of the latest evidence on mental health and addictions concerns relevant to 2SLGBTQ+ people. <i>Comments:</i>	
2. Service providers are aware that the presenting mental health and addictions problems of 2SLGBTQ+ clients are not related to sexual orientation or gender identity, but may be related to experiences of homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and heterosexism. <i>Comments:</i>	
3. Service providers are aware of the societal prejudice and discrimination that 2SLGBTQ+ people experience and are able to assist them in overcoming internalized negative attitudes towards their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. <i>Comments:</i>	
4. Service providers are aware of the concept of the intersectionality of identities, and consider the effect on clients if they are 2SLGBTQ+ and also marginalized in other ways in society (eg. are Indigenous, from a racialized group, are living with a disability or chronic illness, are living in poverty, etc). <i>Comments:</i>	
5. Service providers are comfortable disclosing their own pronouns, sexual orientation and gender identity. <i>Comments:</i>	
6. Service providers include violence screening questions in all assessments in a gender-neutral way without assuming an opposite sex partner. <i>Comments:</i>	
7. Service providers assess for prevalent risk factors in the 2SLGBTQ+ community such as social isolation, harassment, struggles with family of origin, depression, suicidal ideation, substance use. <i>Comments:</i>	
8. Service providers are comfortable asking 2SLGBTQ+ clients about an aspect of their lives they may not fully understand. <i>Comments:</i>	
9. Service providers feel comfortable discussing sexual health issues with 2SLGBTQ+ clients and use language that includes men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women, bisexuality, and pansexuality. <i>Comments:</i>	
10. Service providers are aware that the concept of “coming out” is a lifelong/ongoing process for 2SLGBTQ+ people, not just a one-time event. <i>Comments:</i>	
11. Service providers are aware of the term Two-Spirit, and know that some 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous people use that term to describe themselves. <i>Comments:</i>	
12. Service providers are aware of the myths and misconceptions about bisexuality and pansexuality.	

Comments:	
13. Service providers are aware of the health issues faced by trans-people, such as how to obtain trans-affirming primary health-care, gender-affirming surgery, hormones, etc. Comments:	
14. When running groups, service providers establish group norms that facilitate the safety and inclusion of participants from diverse communities such as 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Comments:	
15. When running groups, service providers create a climate that supports the voluntary self-identification and self-disclosure for 2SLGBTQ+ participants. Comments:	
16. When running groups, service providers intervene when homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia threatens members' safety or dignity. Comments:	

Overall comments in this section:
Strengths in this section:
Priority areas for attention:
Recommendations and resources:

G. Physical Environment

This section should be completed once per program in the organization.

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

Scale: **0** **1** **2** **3** **4**
 Not at all true Slightly true Somewhat true Mostly true Very much true
Score

1. The program has an anti-discrimination statement that is displayed in a visible area for all clients, visitors, and staff to see. This statement explicitly includes gender identity and sexual orientation. <i>Comments:</i>	
2. Posters that include 2SLGBTQ+ people and that are related to 2SLGBTQ+ issues are displayed in a visible area for all clients, visitors, and staff to see. These posters show a diverse range of 2SLGBTQ+ people, including Indigenous, racialized, and trans people. <i>Comments:</i>	
3. The program has a rainbow flag, trans flag, and/or “positive space” sign in a visible area. These signs and flags should include brown and black stripes to include racialized people, and the white/pink/blue of the trans flag. <i>Comments:</i>	
4. 2SLGBTQ+ specific media, resources, local newsletters, etc, are displayed in all waiting areas. <i>Comments:</i>	
5. The program has clearly-labelled all-gender washrooms available for clients, visitors, and staff to use. <i>Comments:</i>	

Overall comments in this section:
Strengths in this section:
Priority areas for attention:
Recommendations and resources:

Summary of Assessment Findings

Overall comments:
Overall strengths:
Overall priority areas for attention:
Overall recommendations and resources: