

“Pushed (back) in the Closet”

Research Findings on the
Safety Needs of
LGBTTIQQ2S Women and
Trans Communities



Introduction

- Research report conducted to assess the safety needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning, and two-spirited (LGBTTIQQ2S) women and trans individuals in the City of Toronto.

Purpose

- To gain a general understanding of women's and trans communities' experience with and fear of violence in public spaces within the City of Toronto, and
- To use the information to develop and enhance safety resources for these communities.

Setting and Context

- Current popular misconception that a life relatively free of harassment is available to LGBTTIQQ2S-identified individuals.
- Canada, the United States, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway all collect statistics on crimes motivated by homophobic or sexual orientation bias.
- None of the international reports available show a decrease in the overall incidence of homophobic hate and bias-motivated crimes.
- Reports suggest crimes are increasing in some countries and in some instances are becoming more violent in nature.

Methods - Design

- Online survey used in the data collection for this report was adapted from METRAC's Community Safety Audit Kit.
- Combination of open and close-ended questions on safety needs and concerns, as well as experiences of violence and fears of violence motivated by bias.

Methods – Sampling and Recruitment

- Outreach to publicize the survey was conducted through contacting established networks, as well as through email listservs.
- A direct link to the survey was posted on METRAC's website and handbills were distributed at community events.
- The survey was also launched at Toronto's 2008 Pride events through a booth set up in the women's area and staffed by volunteers of YMCA Toronto.
- Hard copies of the survey were made available at specified locations.
- The online survey was made available from June to October 2008.

Data Analysis

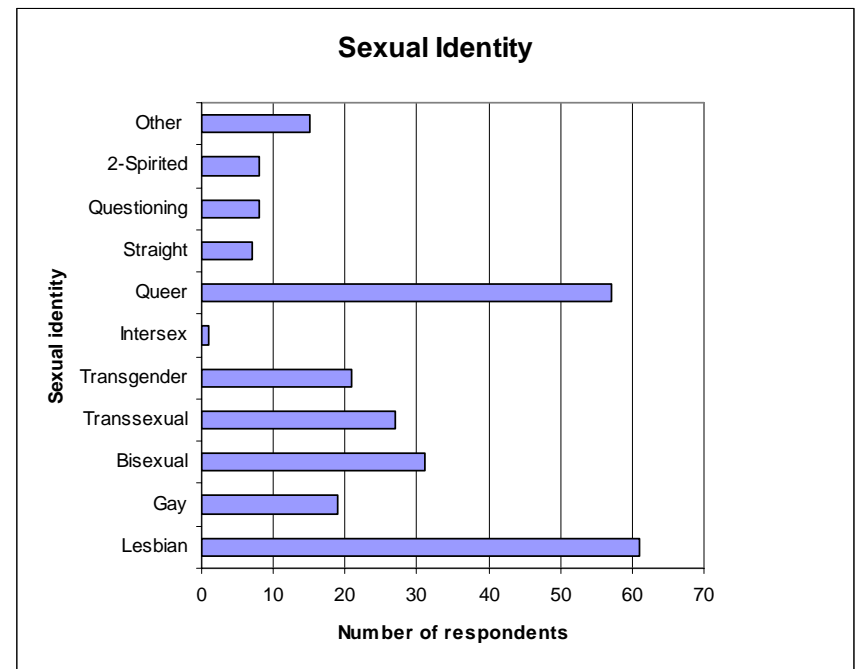
- Quantitative data generated through the closed-ended questions in the survey was analyzed using Excel and SPSS.
- Text responses were examined for recurrent themes and terms both manually and using NVivo, a software package designed for the management of qualitative data.

Results – Response Rate

- Of the 185 surveys that were started, 86 were completed in their entirety, resulting in an overall 46.5% completion rate.
- Data analysis is based on a sample of 145 surveys where particular questions had been answered resulting in a completion rate of 78.4%.

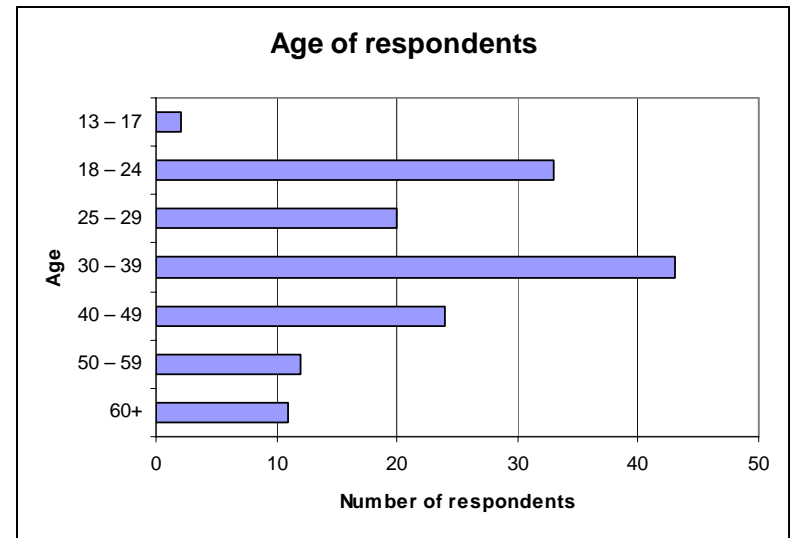
Results - Demographics

- The largest group of respondents identified as lesbian (42.1%).
- The next largest group identified as queer (39.3%).
- The third largest group identified as bisexual (21.4%).



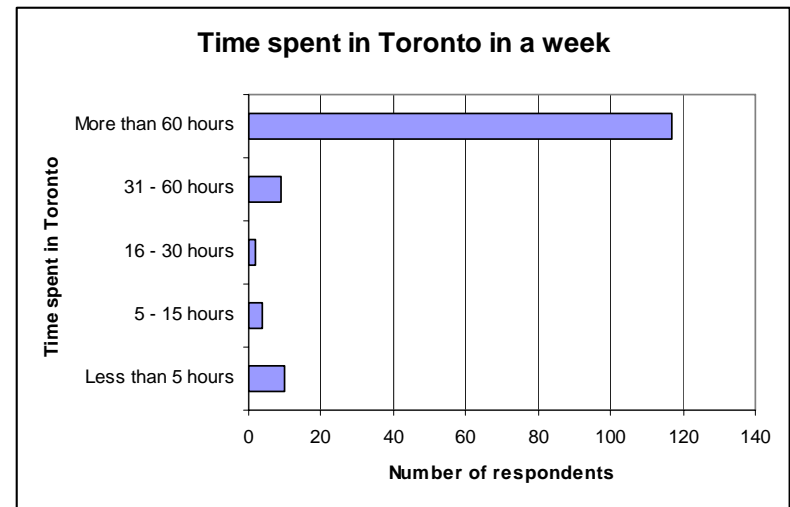
Results - Demographics

- The majority of survey respondents (29.7%) were 30 to 39 years old.
- Next largest group of respondents were 18 to 24, followed by respondents 40 to 49 years of age.
- Youth comprised less than 2% of survey respondents.



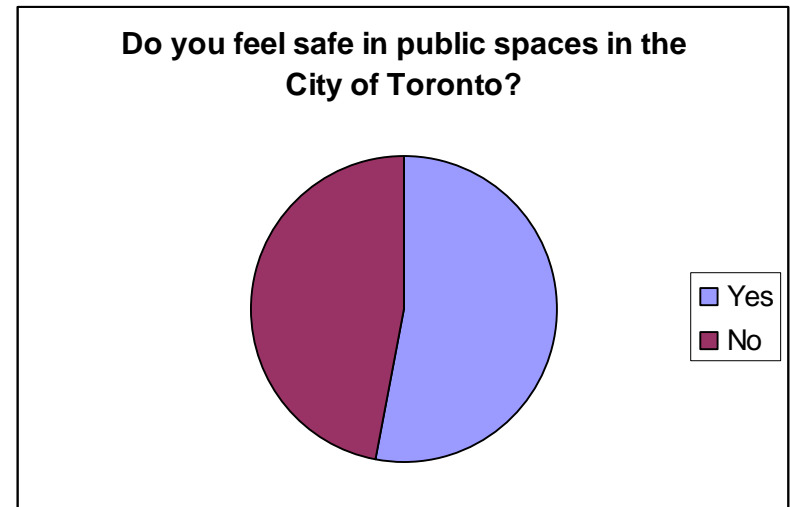
Results - Demographics

- When asked, “Do you live, work, study or frequently visit the City of Toronto?” the majority of respondents (96.6%) said “yes”.



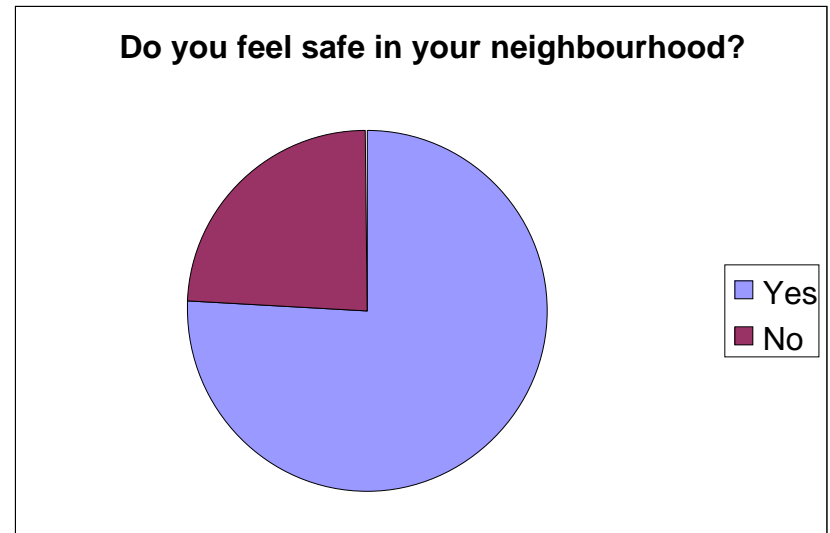
Results - Safety

- Responses were somewhat evenly divided. More respondents replied “yes” (53.1%) than “no” (46.9%).
- The responses varied greatly, but repeated themes included:
 - a) feeling less safe on public transit/the TTC;
 - b) feeling less secure in parks or at nighttime on the street; and
 - c) feeling endangered when using public washrooms.



Results - Safety

- “Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?” the majority of respondents (75.9%) said “yes”..
- When asked, “Have you personally experienced incidents of discrimination or harassment in your neighbourhood” 73.5%, replied “yes”.



Results - Safety

- Described incidents of oppression, discrimination, and harassment included:
 - Verbal comments (81.4%),
 - Threats of physical violence (25.8%),
 - More subtle discrimination such as glances or staring (64.9%). Individuals recounted instances

Results - Safety

- *“I would not go sit in park alone as a person of color. I have been called queer names while walking to the subway.”*
- *“When I am with trans friends who do not pass, I am treated differently than [when I am] alone.”*

Results – Experiences of harassment

- Quotes highlight the particular danger of being out and transgressing gender norms in multiple ways.

“Less so now that I’m passing as male consistently, but for a long time I felt like I had big sticker on my forehead that said ‘Freak’; when I would dress in male clothing, but still looked very female. And as my body began to change, I felt very conspicuous in my neighbourhood where people who lived in the area could watch me change over time. A group of young men who hung out at a bar would get very phobic as I walked past.”

Results – Experiences of harassment

- Women described instances of sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia.

These incidents contrasted depending on whether they were alone or with their partner while experiencing the harassment.

“In the parks and TTC at night, I mostly fear being assaulted as a woman and as a survivor of sexual assault. I feel quite comfortable as a queer woman downtown (I am also aware that as a femme, how I am perceived in terms of orientation differs than when I am with my partner who is butch, then I am more concerned about her safety).”

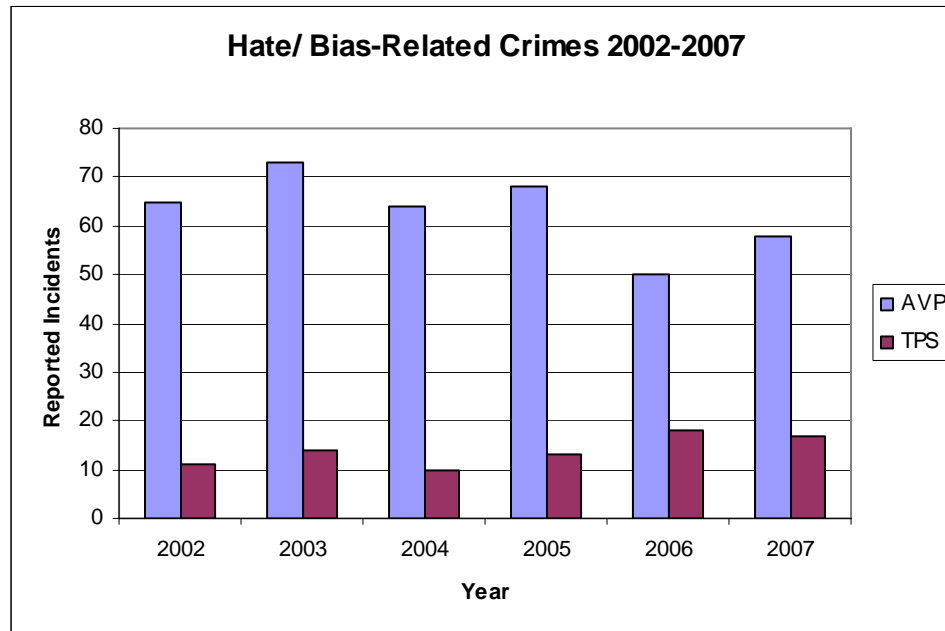
The impact of violence - strategies

- *“I isolate and rarely go out now.”*
- *“I think this incident has left me scared to come out to people.”*
- *“We are taking our daughter out of the public school system.”*
- *“I feel safe in all these places as long as I act as a ‘straight’ person.”*

Reporting of Violence

- *“Police are intimidating.”*
- *“I would not report verbal harassment / following / threats to the police because I do not believe they would take them seriously.”*
- *“Police often further oppress and base follow-up of reports on the 'worthy victim', often gender related and sexual orientation related offenses are not taken seriously.”*

Reporting of Violence



Conclusion

- Results point to the need for further quantitative and qualitative research on the prevalence, nature, and impact of harassment, discrimination, and violent hate crimes in the City of Toronto's LGBTTIQQ2S communities.
- Further assessment of the frequency of incidents is needed to address the need for services.
- Further exploration of the type of confrontations experienced is also needed to develop appropriate prevention, advocacy, education, and support services.
- Prevention efforts must be focused on the mainstream community and needs to be multi-faceted, focusing on education campaigns in workplaces, public spaces, and public transit, and directed to witnesses of incidents of violence and intimidation.

Recommendations for Action

1. Public transit- METRAC will build on its relationship with the TTC to encourage that it is safer for women and trans members of LGBTTIQQ2S communities. This will include training for staff, creating specific safety programs or features to create safer spaces.

Recommendations for Action

2. Creating safety audit tools for use by women and trans members of LGBTTIQQ2S communities. Also, review METRAC's audit tools for use by employers and service providers to ensure that these reflect the issues raised in the report re safer spaces.

Recommendations for Action

3. Reporting- Continue to encourage persons to report hate-based incidents so that this data can be used to continue to advocate for safer public spaces.
4. Look at better use of technology to facilitate reporting, e.g., text messaging, and more funding for this.

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)

- NCAVP is a coalition of programs that document and advocate for victims of anti-LGBT and anti-HIV/AIDS violence/harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, police misconduct and other forms of victimization.
- Statistics are collected from 32 agencies.
- 30 American. 2 Canadian.

NCAVP Report for 2008

- The total number of victims reporting anti-LGBT violence to NCAVP in 2008 was 2,424 which represent a 2% increase over the total number of victims reported in 2007 and a 26% increase over a two year period.
- There was an increase of female-identified victims (6% over 2007), constituting 29% of total victims.

NCAVP 2008 Report

- People of color comprised 52% of callers for whom such data was known in 2008. Specifically, people of African descent made up 20% of victims, up 3% over the previous year. Latina/o victims comprised 23%, up 2% from the previous year. People of Arab/Middle Eastern descent made up about 3% of victims, as did those identifying as multi-racial. Native American/Indigenous people made up 2% and people of Asian descent comprised 1% of victims, down 2% from 2007. White callers comprised 48% of the total for whom race was known. The chart does not include the relatively large 26% of victims for whom race was unknown.

NCAVP 2008 Report

- Out of the total number of incidents, 28% were also reported to the police, consistent with the percentage of reports made to police last year (29%).
- Incidents occurring in or around private residences constituted the most frequent site of anti-LGBT bias (32%).

NCAVP 2008 Report

- Those identifying as heterosexual made up 9% of victims, up slightly from the 6% who identified as such in 2007.
- Of the total injuries reported in 2008, 216 (46%) were classified as “serious” meaning that the injury required medical attention.

About Us

Howard Shulman is the Coordinator of The 519 Anti-Violence Program (AVP) at The 519 Church Street Community Centre. Since 1991 AVP has been providing support and advocacy for LGBTQ individuals who have experienced harassment or assault based upon their actual (or perceived) sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Contact: 416-355-6782

[avp@the 519.org](mailto:avp@the519.org),

www.the519.org

About Us

Michelle Davis is the Safety Program Director at METRAC, the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children. METRAC was created in 1984 and works to end violence against diverse groups of women, youth and children through its training, advocacy, and education programs.

Contact: safety@metrac.org, 416-392-3137
www.metrac.org

About Us

Ruth Cameron is a Research Consultant and a graduate student in the Health Research Methodology Program at McMaster University. She is a McMaster University Positive Space Facilitator, CAW Local 555 Human Rights Committee Chair, and a board member at The Well, the LGBTQ Community Wellness Centre of Hamilton.

Contact rcamer@mcmaster.ca

References

Acceptance has its limits, Gays and lesbians find: Assault on Oshawa mothers a sign that not all Canadians tolerant of same-sex couples. (2008, November 18). The Toronto Star. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/538468>.

CAW-Canada. (2008). Pride in Print. Fall 2008.

Dauvergne, Scrim & Brennan, M., Scrim, K., & Brennan, S. Hate Crime in Canada 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008017-eng.pdf>

Dick, S. (2008). Homophobic Hate Crime: The Gay British Crime Survey. Retrieved from http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/homophobic_hate_crime__final_report.pdf.

Egale Canada. Egale Canada First National Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools: Phase One Results. Retrieved from <http://www.egale.ca/extra/1393-Homophobia-Backgrounder.pdf>

Faulkner, E. (1997). Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence in Toronto: The Impact on Individuals and Communities. Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice.

Fountain, K. (2008). Anti-Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender violence in 2007: A report of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. Retrieved from http://www.ncavp.org/common/document_files/Reports/2007HVRReportFINAL.pdf

Gannon, M. and Mihorean, K. 2005. Criminal victimization in Canada. Juristat. 25(7). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

References

- Herek, G. Hate crimes and stigma-related experiences among sexual minority adults in the United States: Prevalence estimates from a national probability sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(54), 54-74.
doi:0.1177/08826260508316477
- Lesbian couple attacked by man outside Oshawa school. (2008, November 8). Newsdurhamregion.com. Retrieved from <http://newsdurhamregion.com/news/article/112449>.
- Stahnke, T., LeGendre, P., Grekov, I., Petti, V., McClintock, M., and Aronowitz, A., (2008). Violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity bias: 2008 hate crime survey. Retrieved from <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/pdf/fd/08/fd-080924-lgbt-web2.pdf>
- The Yogyakarta Principles: principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. Retrieved from http://www.homo.se/upload/homo/pdf_homo/Yogyakarta_Principles_EN.pdf
- Statistics Canada. Family portrait: Continuity and change in Canadian families and households in 2006, 2006 census. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. 29
- Toronto Police Service. (2007). Toronto Police Service, Hate Crime Unit, 2007 Annual Hate/Bias Crime Statistical Report. Retrieved from <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2007hatecrimereport.pdf>