

# RESEARCH REVIEW

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF 2SLGBTQ+ YOUTH THROUGHOUT THEIR HOUSING JOURNEYS

BY: AMETHYST ZAPISOCKY

---

Safe, Stable, Long-Term: Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Along the Housing Continuum, written by Christina Hackett, Chloe Halpenny, Basia Pakula, and Tiffany Scurr, investigates 2SLGBTQ+ youth's intersectional access to housing. This report was made by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) and Mentor Canada. The SRDC and their collaborators reviewed the current policy, research, and lived experience of 2SLGBTQ+ youth housing journeys.



Overall, they examined what barriers and facilitators exist for obtaining stable, safe, and long-term housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

2SLGBTQ+ youth and service providers were directly engaged with to gain authentic insight into their experiences with housing. Experiences were detailed alongside programs and policies available on the housing continuum. This continuum includes the various stages of securing housing, from no housing to home ownership. A “queer-centered housing continuum” (p. 4) is proposed by this report which is non-linear and more representative of lived experience. The report noted research gaps in the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, how supported they feel where they are on the continuum, and those seeking long-term rather than transitional housing. The authors explain that individual and systemic levels of discrimination negatively affect 2SLGBTQ+ youth from accessing any form of housing, which is especially the case for racialized, gender-diverse, and otherwise marginalized youth.

## Summary

This report was split into two phases. The first was a literature and policy review on 2SLGBTQ+ youth housing. For this, they utilized five interconnected research methods including:

- A literature review of articles that examined 2SLGBTQ+ housing experiences, outcomes, barriers and facilitators.
- A Point-in-Time data analysis looking at the prevalence of under-housed youth.
- A National Youth Mentoring Survey to observe the connection between 2SLGBTQ+ identity with housing experiences and outcomes.
- A desk review and a service provider survey investigating the available programs/organizations that serve 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Taken together, they found 21% of under-housed youth identified as 2SLGBTQ+, and this housing instability was for longer durations and earlier onset. Poorer outcomes were observed for these youth compared to under-housed non-2SLGBTQ+ populations. They also found that discrimination and housing instability exist throughout the housing continuum, with a lack of inclusive and accessible supports being pervasive (especially outside of urban areas). Gender-diverse youth are especially at risk for these experiences.

Phase two expanded on the findings from the first by working with 2SLGBTQ+ youth who have experienced housing insecurity and the organizations that serve this community. Those recruited were active in the research process and had the opportunity to provide feedback to the researchers throughout. The goal was to gain insight from 2SLGBTQ+ youth and

service providers to better understand transitions within the housing continuum, explore experiences, discern their needs, and identify service gaps. A simplified summary of their findings is as follows:

- Accessing housing support is hindered due to individual, service, and system/policy factors. Respectively, youth may fear accessing services, there is limited service funding, and targeted initiatives are lacking.
- Beneficial services foster connections, have queer-centered spaces, include staff with lived experience, are affirming, is harm reductionist and trauma-informed.
- An updated housing continuum prototype that addresses the complexity of the 2SLGBTQ+ experience was created. It is non-linear and incorporates the challenges and positives of their living spaces from under to independently housed.
- Housing adequacy is beyond housing type, the living conditions should support holistic well-being. Adequate housing depends on individual perceptions/needs.

Recommendations for policymakers and providers to improve serving 2SLGBTQ+ needs include establishing and implementing more diverse housing options, 2SLGBTQ+-focused programs, family-based interventions, training and capacity-building, and conducting further research.





## Discussion

This report offers a thorough exploration of 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiences with housing, as well as the support services that serve them along the housing continuum. 2SLGBTQ+ youth have unique experiences and are impacted by intersectional barriers which warrant inclusive and tailored policies/programs to meet the needs of this community and the marginalized populations within it. Their recommendations for policymakers and support organizations are insightful because it was directly informed by lived experiences. This is an excellent foundation for understanding and suggesting action for supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth's journeys with housing. However, more work is needed to implement these insights and further investigate this topic (for example, exploring the proposed housing-continuum prototype).

While the report addresses disadvantaged intersectionality, specific research is needed to elaborate on these important experiences within the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Phase two's sample size was seven, which future research should expand on. This sample specifies having one Indigenous and one racialized recruit, which indicates a gap that still needs to be filled: targeted research on 2SLGBTQ+ populations that face further inequity based on race, gender identity, and diverse-ability. This report is a good starting point and does recognize these intersectionalities, but gaps in intersectional service and lived experiences are still in need of attention and care.

*Amethyst Zapisocky is working towards a BA in psychology at the University of Alberta. A fourth-year undergraduate student, her career focus is on research and social development. She values equity, learning, and philanthropy. Personally, Amethyst enjoys statistics, mindfulness and jazz music.*

## REFERENCES

Hackett, C., Halpenny, C., Pakula, B., & Scurr, T. (2022). Safe, stable, long-term: Supporting 2SLGBTQ-Plus youth along the housing continuum: Final integrated report. The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.  
<https://www.srdc.org/publications/Safe-stable-long-term-Supporting-2SLGBTQ-Plus-youth-along-the-housing-continuum--Final-integrated-report-details.aspx>