



DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

**RESEARCH OF LGBTQ2S LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS
IN CALGARY**

**Research conducted by
Hilary L. Chapple**

**Community Leader,
Homeless/Poverty & LGBTQ2S Advocate**

IN MEMORIAM



To My Great-Niece

Hayley Louise Desmond

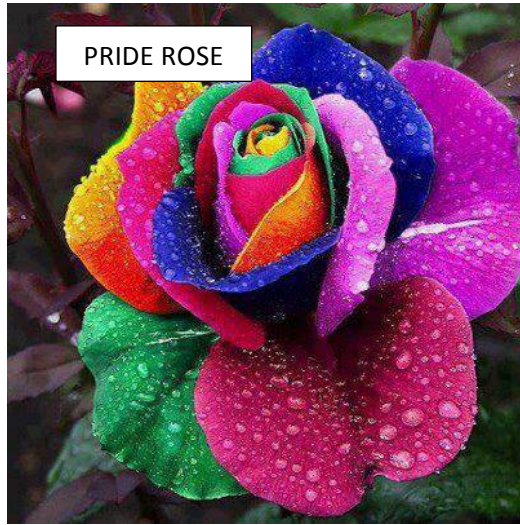
June 17th, 1993 – May 24th, 2016

(aka Liz B. Anne)

**“There is a tender thought of you
down deep within my Heart
That makes of every lovely day
the brightest dearest part**

**And though our paths may separate
and your smile make block from view
It’s powerless to take from me
The love I bear for you”**

by Alice Lauretta Chapple (My Mother)



Dedicated to the Trailblazers

Who are or have been homeless

&

All who identify as LGBTQ2S

With respect and gratitude

You are loved and you are valued

INTRODUCTION

When I originally conceived this project, I had no idea that it would take me to this level. I was not anticipating anything. I was trying to find out if there was a need to have more diversity and inclusion in the homeless serving sector which include agencies, service providers and shelters. From my own lived experience, I know that shelters need to be more diverse and inclusive to serve the LGBTQ2S homeless community with components and programs designed specifically for this community. It would stand to reason then that service providers and agencies could have those programming components as well.

For Context – About the Author

Am I an expert in homelessness? Absolutely not. But I have been an LGBTQ+ activist for 30 years or more when the fight for same-sex marriage rights was in process. I was one of the leaders in this battle. I appeared in the media several times and successfully designed and coordinated a Weekend Summit which included, workshops, a trade show and with guest speakers from the Alberta Human Rights Commission and spiritual representation in Red Deer, Alberta. At the Summit we discussed having a provincial coordinated effort to campaign against the Alberta Legislature; to persuade them to include same sex rights in the Individual Rights Protection Act (now called the Alberta Human Rights Act), which was eventually successful. In the mid 1990's, Alberta was one of a few provinces that did not have Sexual Orientation as part of the IRPA. (*Individual Rights Protection Act – 1966*)

I coordinated the event twice and I was co-designer of the project while working for the Alberta Government.

Because of coming out I have been discriminated against twice; having my car destroyed and losing a good paying job because of my activism.

Also, it should be noted that I do not hold a Doctorate in Social Work, Philosophy or any other degree. But what I do have is my lived experience of homelessness and I identify as a queer woman.

In the interest of full disclosure, I will admit I took one of my surveys myself as I was in the system and experienced discrimination and bias from shelter staff and other female residents. I stand by my decision to do this. I have gained so much more knowledge over the course of five years and now realize the residents were acting out of fear and their own personal trauma. The staff should have known better. No blame; let's just fix it.



METHODOLOGY

The survey comprised of 20 questions and participants were encouraged to tell their truth as best as they could. Participants were offered anonymity and were given the choice to use a pseudonym if they wished. They were paid \$25 cash for their participation and signed a consent form before conducting the survey.

Below are the survey questions. They were developed through a review of the Point-in-Time Count surveys and consultations with experts in the field.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. **What gender do you identify with?**
 - a. *Male / man*
 - b. *Female / woman*
 - c. *Trans female / trans woman*
 - d. *Trans male / trans man*

2. **How do you describe your sexual orientation?**
 - a. *Straight/Heterosexual*
 - b. *Gay*
 - c. *Lesbian*
 - d. *Bisexual*
 - e. *Two Spirit*

3. **How old are you [or] What year were you born?**
 - a. *Age (in years): [insert age]*
 - b. *Or Year: [insert year]*

c. *Don't know*

4. **What is your ethnic/cultural identity?** _____

5. **Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry? (This includes First Nations with or without status, Métis, and Inuit). If Yes**

a. *First Nations (with or without status)*

b. *Inuit*

c. *Metis*

6. **Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant?**

a. *Yes*

b. *Not Applicable*

7. **If you came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant, how long have you been in Canada?**

a. *Length*

b. *Or date*

c. *Not Applicable*

8. **Are you in a relationship currently?**

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

9. **Where do you get your Income from? [Select All That Apply]**

a. *Employment*

b. *Informal/self-employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling)*

c. *Employment insurance*

d. *Welfare/social assistance*

e. *Disability benefit (e.g. AISH)*

f. *Seniors benefits (e.g., CPP/OAS/GIS)*

g. *GST refund*

h. *Child and family tax benefits*

i. *Money from family/friends*

j. *Other source: [insert answer]*

k. *Child Support*

l. *No income*

10. **Do you have with these health concerns? Only answer if you are comfortable**

a. *Mental Health issues*

b. *Addiction to Opioids – Former or Present*

c. *Addiction to Alcohol – Former or Present*

- d. *Infectious Disease*
- e. *Dental Problems*
- f. *Musculoskeletal disorders and chronic pain.*
- g. *Hunger and nutrition.*
- h. *Skin & foot problems.*
- i. *Respiratory illness.*
- j. *Chronic diseases and disorders.*
- k. *Sexual & reproductive care.*

For the next questions, "homelessness" means any time when you have been without a secure place to live, including sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or living temporarily with others which is Hidden Homelessness and what your experience was like

11. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

- a. *Age (in years): [insert age]*
- b. *Don't know*

12. In total, how much time have you experienced homelessness in your life?

- a. *How long [insert number] days / weeks / months*
- b. *How Many times*
- c. *Not Sure*

13. Are you open with your gender identity and/or sexual orientation in your current living situation?

- a. *Yes*
- b. *No*

14. If you have come out to staff, has your confidentiality and privacy been respected?

- a. *Yes*
- b. *No*

15. When discussing Housing First, are you or were you given the option to go to a housing program which is LGBTQ2S inclusive if available?

- a. *Yes*
- b. *No*
- c. *Not Applicable*

16. Does your or did your shelter promote inclusivity and diversity?

- a. *Yes*
- b. *No*
- c. *Not Applicable*

17. Overall if you are staying in a SHELTER, have you been treated respectfully in regards to your sexual orientation or gender identity?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not Applicable

18. Overall if you are living in a HOUSING FIRST program, have you been treated respectfully in regards to your sexual orientation or gender identity?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not Applicable

19. If living in a SHELTER or participating in a PROGRAM, are the following services/components available?

- a. LGBTQ2S specific Counselling Yes.....No.....
- b. Focus Groups or Committees to shape policy in regards to Shelter Guidelines regarding LGBTQ2S rights or other such issues? Yes.....No.....
- c. Pride, Bi or Transgender Flags posted around the Facility Yes.....No.....
- d. LGBTQ2S resources for outside groups and events Yes.....No.....
- e. Not Applicable

20. If you lived in a SHELTER or a HOUSING FIRST program where you informed off and did any staff let you know if they identified as LGBTQ2S

Yes No

RESULTS

Questions 1 to 5

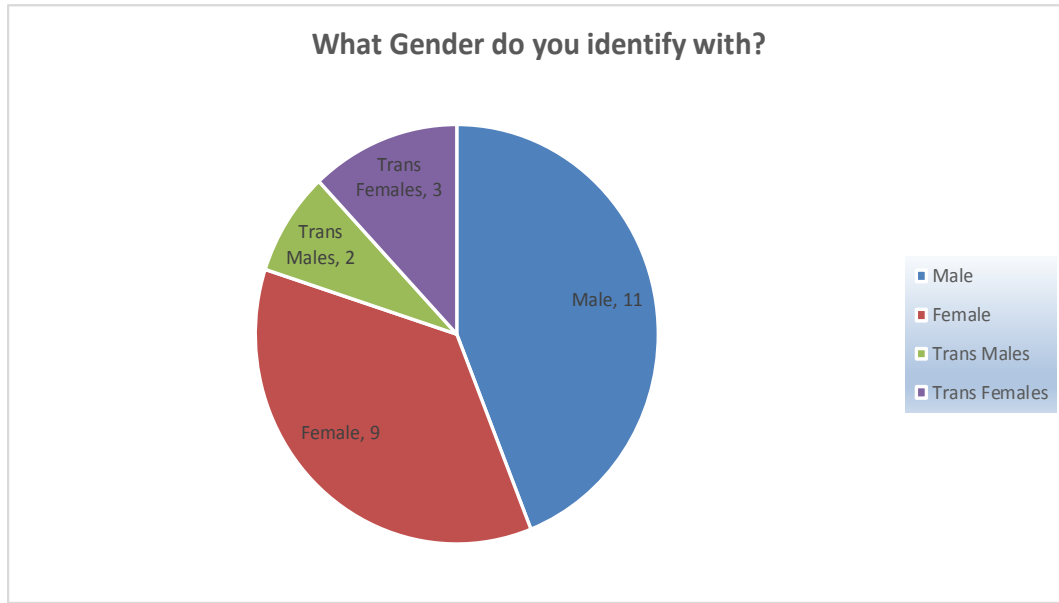
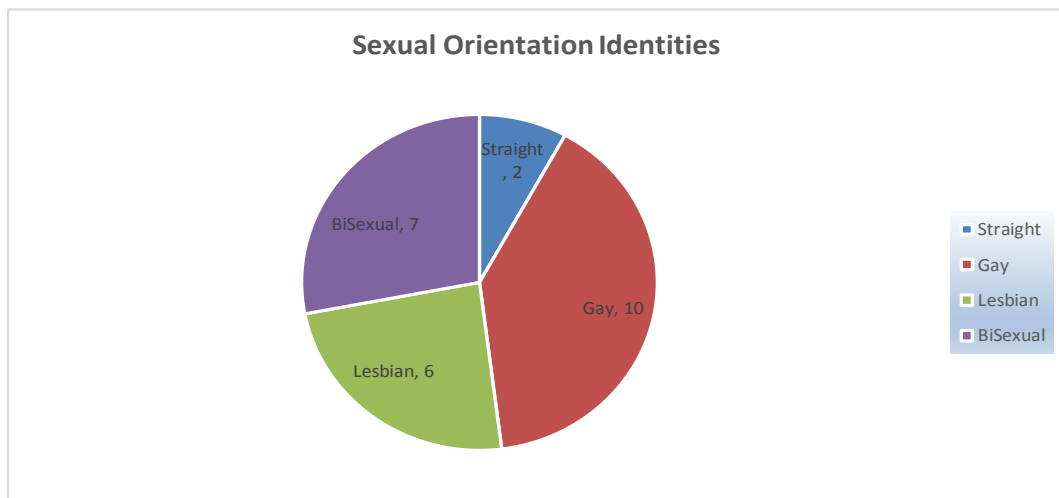


Chart 1: Gender Identities

Eleven participants identified as male, nine participants identified as female, three participants identified as transgender female, and two participants identified as transgender male.



Graph 2: Sexual Orientation

Ten participants identified as gay, seven participants identified as bisexual, six participants identified as lesbian, and two participants identified as straight.

Note: Two Trans Females identified as Straight

Note: One Trans Male identified as Gay

Note: One Trans Female identified as Lesbian

Note: One Trans Male identified as Bisexual

Note: Five individuals also identified themselves as Two-Spirit

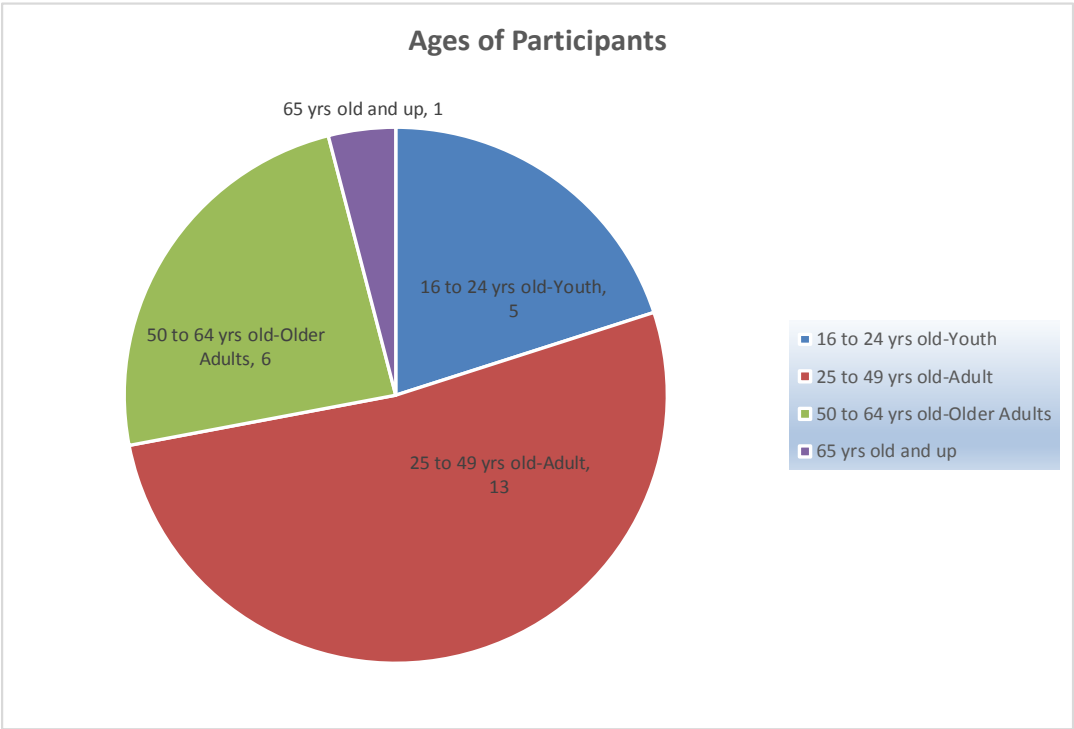


Chart 3: Ages of Participants

Just over half of the participants were between the ages of 25- to 49-years old. Seven participants identified as 50 years and older.

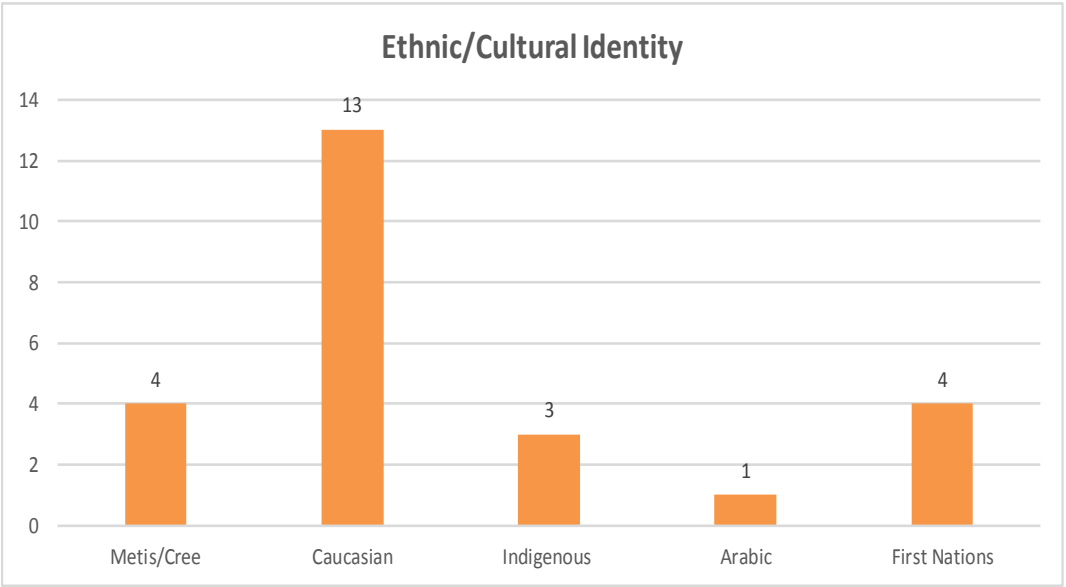


Chart 4: Ethnic & Cultural Identities of Participants

Most participants identified as Caucasian. Eleven participants identified as Indigenous.

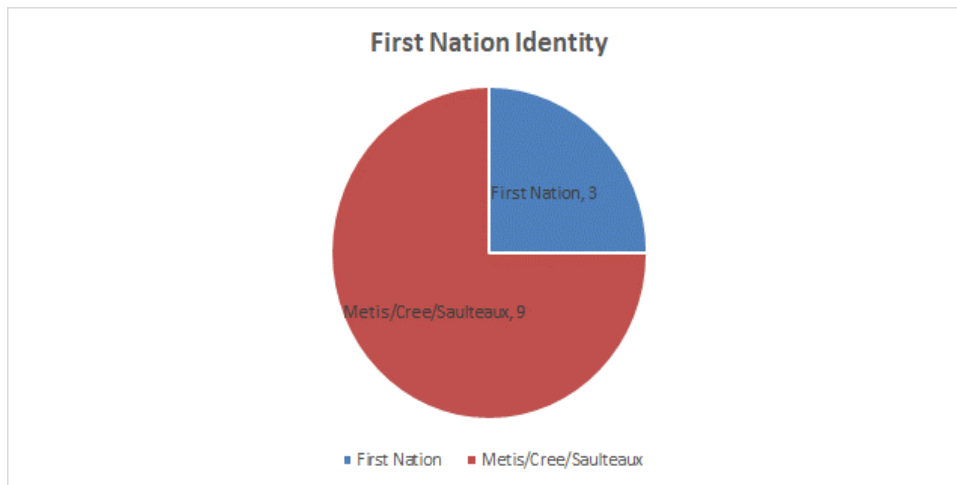


Chart 5:
Participants
who identify as
Indigenous

Of the 12 participants who identified as having Indigenous Ancestry, nine identified as Metis, Cree, or Saulteaux and three identified as First Nation.

Analysis

Results from questions 1 to 5 show that there is a diverse group of people who participated in the survey. For example, 12 participants identified as cisgender or transgender female and 13 participants identified as cisgender or transgender male. Further, all sexual orientations were represented and there was a wide range of age groups.

Five different ethnic/cultural Identities were represented. Twelve participants identified as having Indigenous ancestry. This statistic demonstrates that Indigenous individuals, particularly LGBTQ2S+ Indigenous individuals, are overrepresented among individuals who experience homelessness.

In summary, the survey respondents represented a wide cross section of LGBTQ2S who had experiences of homelessness or who are homeless at this current time. It shows that anyone of any age, of many cultural communities, identify as LGBTQ2S.

PLEASE NOTE: There are no Charts for questions 6 and 7 (immigration status). Only one participant identified as an immigrant.

Question 8

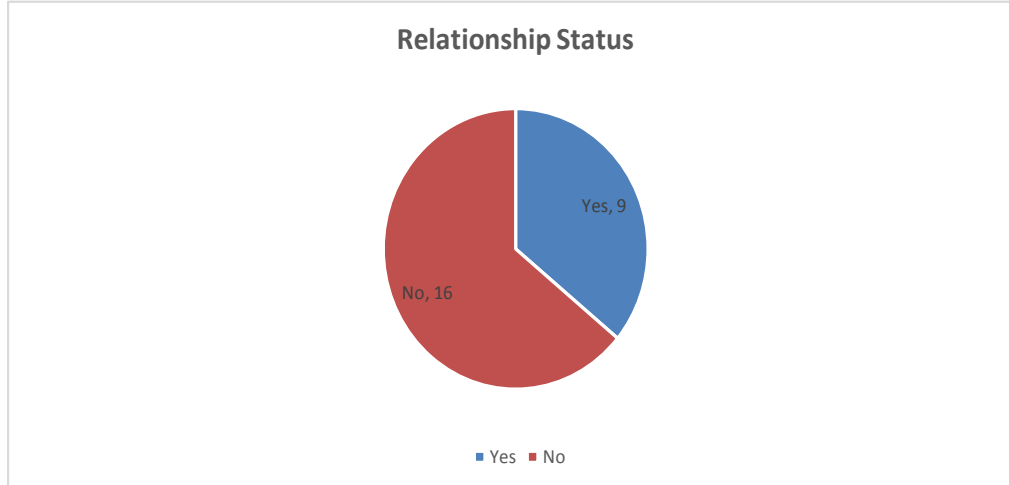


Chart 6:
Relationship Status

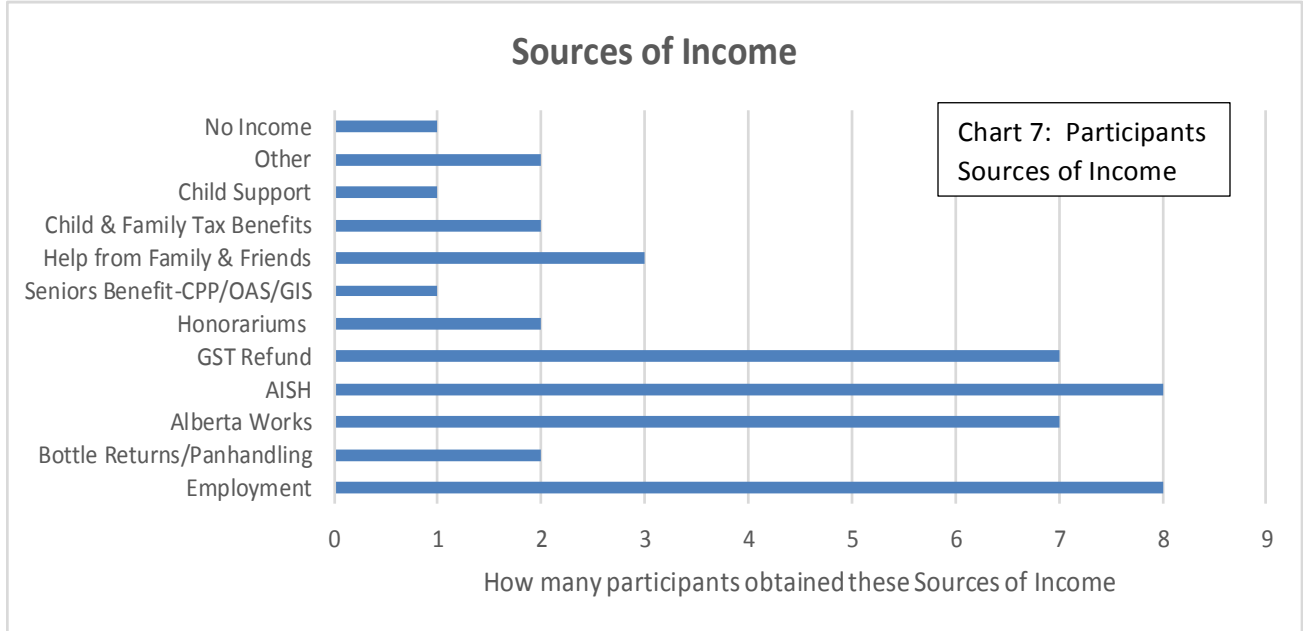
Close to two-thirds (64%) of participants were not in a relationship.

Analysis

This result may suggest that the majority of Calgary's homeless:

1. Are more focused on covering their basic needs
2. Are still traumatized from the state of being homeless
3. Not ready for an emotional connection - courting and falling in love
4. Some participants stated they were having a part-time sexual relationship with no permanent relationship
5. And lastly feel that no one would want them. Homelessness does have a significant stigma attached to it.

Question 9

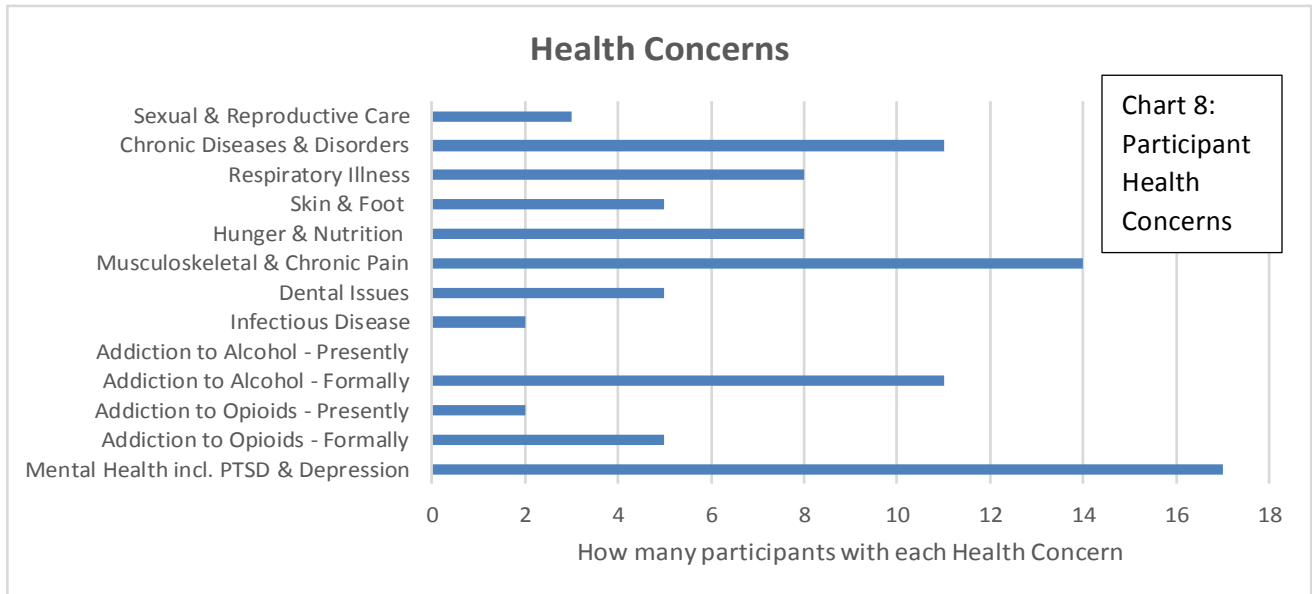


Eight participants were currently working, eight participants were receiving Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), and seven participants were receiving Alberta Works. In the other category, one participant listed revenue from artwork, another participant from tips. One participant stated that they had no source of income.

Analysis

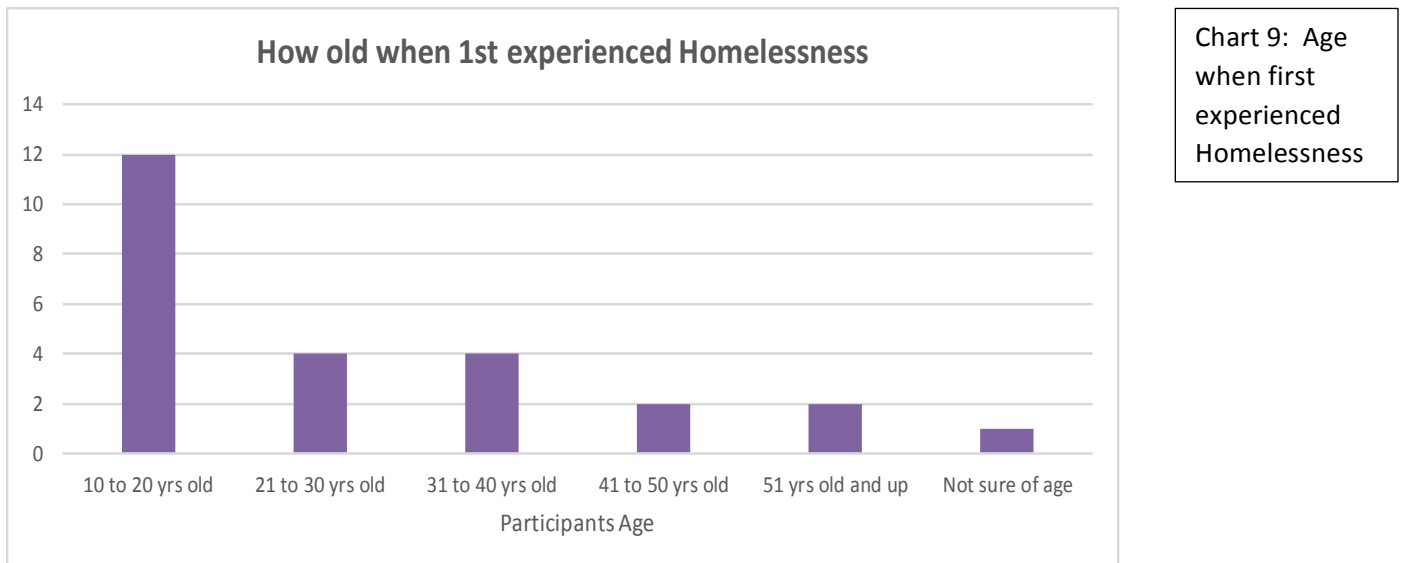
Most participants identified several sources of income. Most employed participants were working part-time and did not have enough money to cover all their basic needs.

Question 10



The most common health concern identified by participants was related to mental health. Most participants identified several health concerns. In relation to substance use, no one stated that they were presently addicted to alcohol however 11 stated that at one time they did have this addiction and received some help through a recovery program. Two participants were addicted to opioids and five have managed to receive some sort of counselling and or help in recovery

Question 11

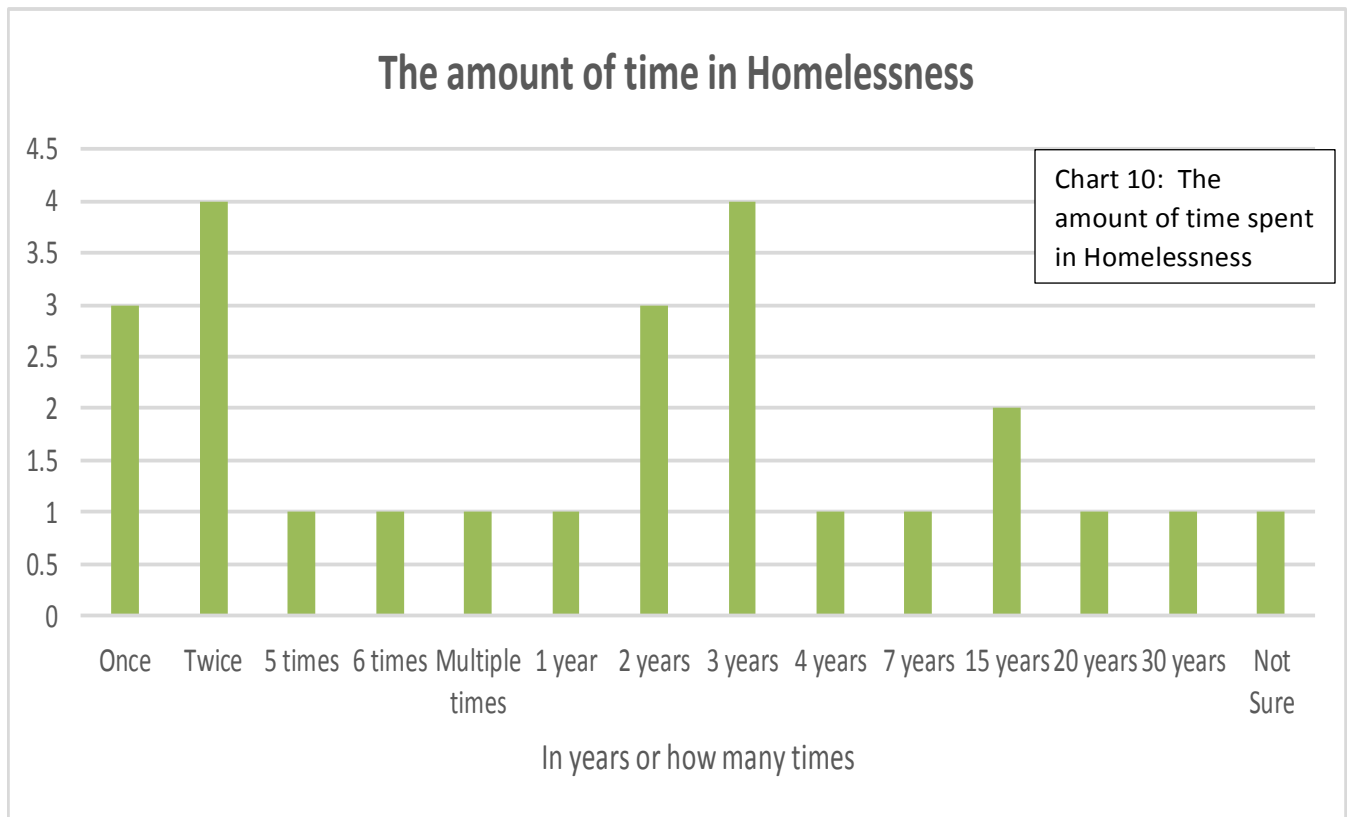


Most participants experienced homelessness at a very young age.

Analysis

Research suggests that 20 to 40% of young people experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ2S+ (Abramovich, 2012). We know that LGBTQ2S+ youth are at a higher risk of homelessness due to homophobia and transphobia in the home and they often face the same discrimination in the shelter system (Abramovich, 2012). LGBTQ2S youth identify the primary reason for homelessness as family rejection due to gender identity or sexual orientation (Abramovich, 2012). LGBTQ2S youth are at a higher risk of mental health concerns and self-harm and exhibit higher rates of suicidality than the general population (Ecker, 2016). Based upon the limited amount of literature available, there are various pathways into homelessness among LGBTQ2S adults. Enhanced vulnerability to family rejection, mental health issues, income disparities, and housing discrimination potentially place LGBTQ2S adults at a greater risk of homelessness (Ecker, Aubry, & Sylvestre, 2018).

Question 12



Many participants had multiple experiences of homelessness in their lifetime. They had varying lengths of time spent homeless.

Analysis

An adequate supply of safe, affordable and appropriate housing is a prerequisite to truly ending homelessness in the long term.

This includes ensuring that people who are chronically and episodically homeless are prioritized and that systems are in place to enable such persons to receive housing and supports through Housing First programs. In a tight housing market, implementing a Housing First agenda becomes that much more challenging. It is also important to address the supply of affordable housing, in order to broaden access for other priority populations, including women fleeing violence, Indigenous Peoples, families, seniors and youth, for instance.

Question 13

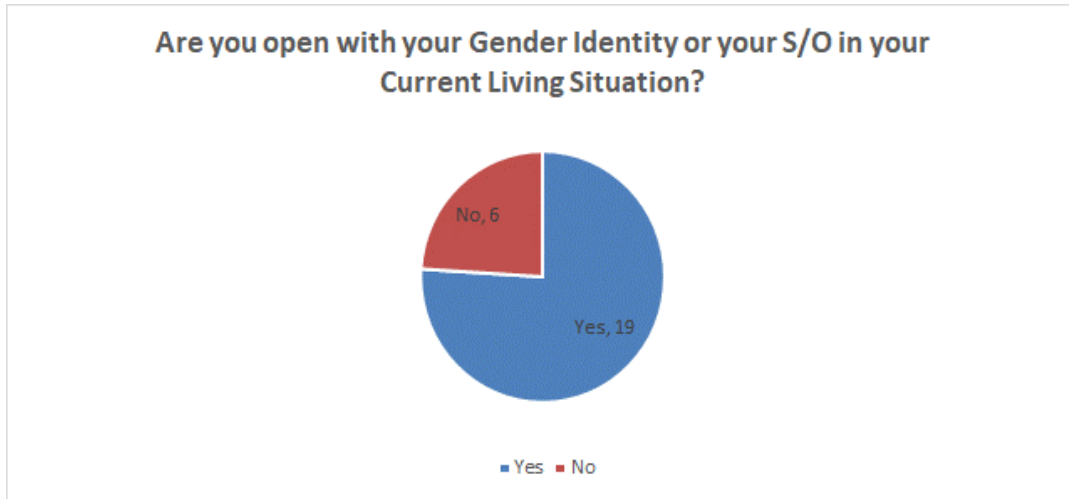


Chart 11: Open with Gender Identity or S/O in current Living Situation

The majority of participants were open with their gender identity and/or sexual orientation in their current living situation.

Question 14

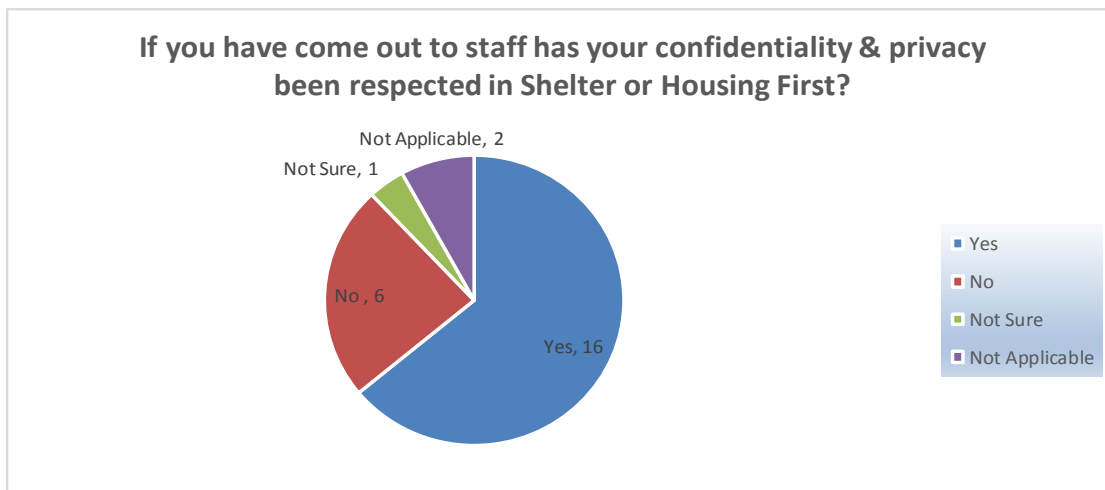


Chart 12: Confidentiality and Privacy

The majority of participants felt that their privacy has been respected after they came out to shelter/housing staff. One participant stated that staff would discuss sexual orientation with each other, and that the participant did not feel safe in their housing because of this.

Question 15

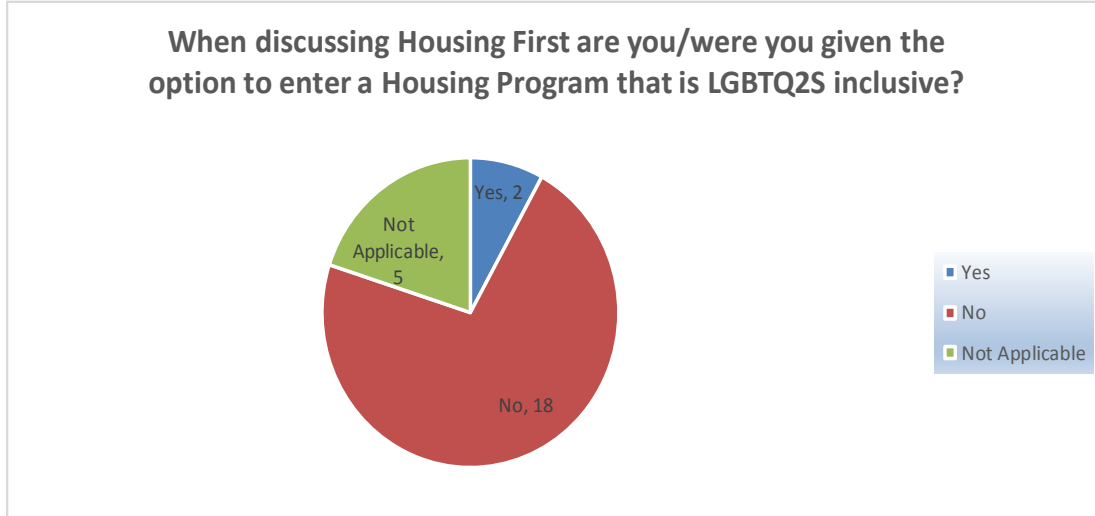


Chart 13:
LGBTQ2S
Inclusivity in
Housing First

For participants who were part of a Housing First program, the overwhelming majority indicated that they were not given the option to enter a housing program that was LGBTQ2S inclusive.

Analysis

This shows that LGBTQ2S individuals are not given the option of going into a Housing First program that is inclusive. This may be due to the lack of inclusive, LGBTQ2S housing that is available in Calgary. The exception is the [Aura Host Program](#) for LGBTQ2S youth.

Question 16

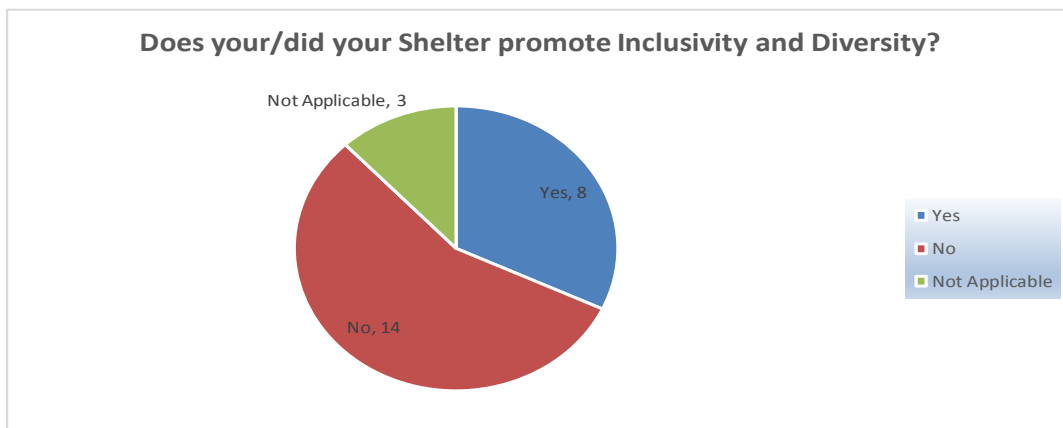


Chart 14: Shelter
Inclusivity and
Diversity

Fourteen participants indicated that the shelter they accessed did not promote inclusivity and diversity. One participant stated that they were frightened and threatened in the shelter by homophobic staff. The shelter did not provide a safe environment for this participant.

Analysis

As stated by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, discrimination is intertwined with homelessness. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness lists seven impacts of discrimination on homelessness:

1. Homelessness and discrimination commonly intersect, as discrimination often acts as a structural precursor to homelessness and, in turn, the experience of homelessness can lead to being discriminated against. Discrimination occurs when an individual is treated differently than another solely on the basis of some characteristic or indeed an interplay of characteristics such as race, sexual orientation, religion, physical disability, mental illness, age, citizenship status, gender, and/or socioeconomic status
2. Discrimination significantly impacts the options and choices of individuals when it comes to all sorts of things in life such as employment, housing and access to services that all contribute to an increased risk of experiencing homelessness
3. In addition, people experiencing homelessness often face restricted access to many of the spaces and places that domiciled individuals typically enjoy, including both public (parks, streets, etc.) and private spaces (restaurants, stores and malls, for instance). One negative consequence is that many people experiencing homelessness are forced, then, to live in dangerous and undesirable environments, which further impairs their ability to move forward with their lives. Although individuals from any background can experience homelessness, research shows that marginalized populations are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness in proportion to their population makeup in Canada
4. From these findings, it is clear that individuals who find themselves subjected to discrimination based on singular or variously intersected elements of their identity consistently face barriers to obtaining housing
5. Discrimination as a precursor to homelessness however is not isolated to housing alone, but rather is underpinned throughout society and reproduces inequality across all spheres, limiting opportunities for socioeconomic mobility and stability
6. Factors that deny individuals housing also work to impede employment and educational opportunities, and can lead to an increased risk of homelessness via a lack of stable income
7. Employment discrimination based on sexual orientation commonly impacts LGBTQ2S individuals in obtaining and/or maintaining employment.

Question 17

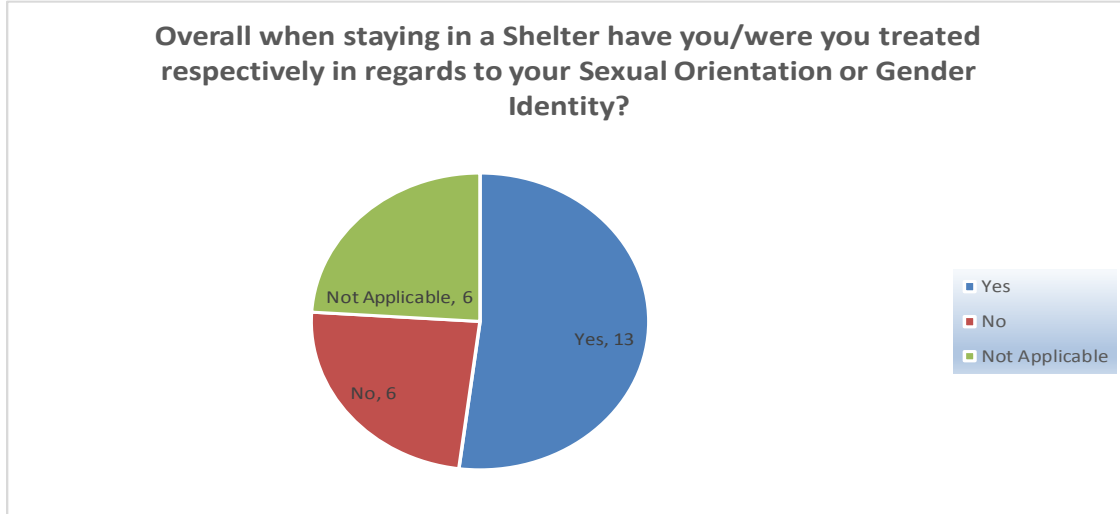


Chart 15:
Shelter respect
for S/O &
Gender
Diversity

Thirteen participants indicated that they were treated respectfully in regards to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. One participant said “yes” but only when they disclosed their sexual orientation. One participant said that staff told them that being gay was a sin.

Analysis

Chart 13 and 14 show similarities but there is a difference in response from the participants. Thirteen participants stated they were treated respectfully in the shelter system BUT the shelter did not promote inclusivity and diversity.

Question 18

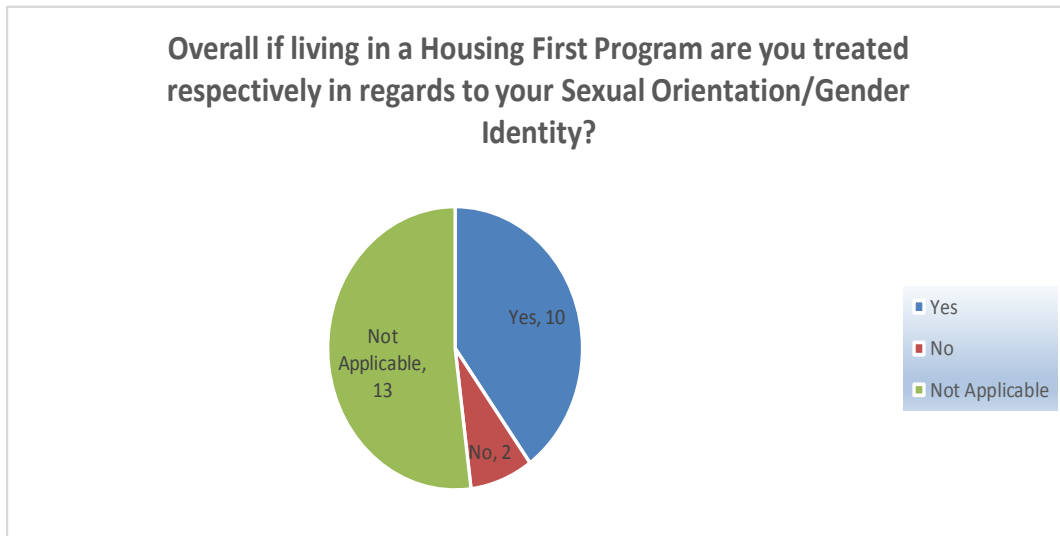
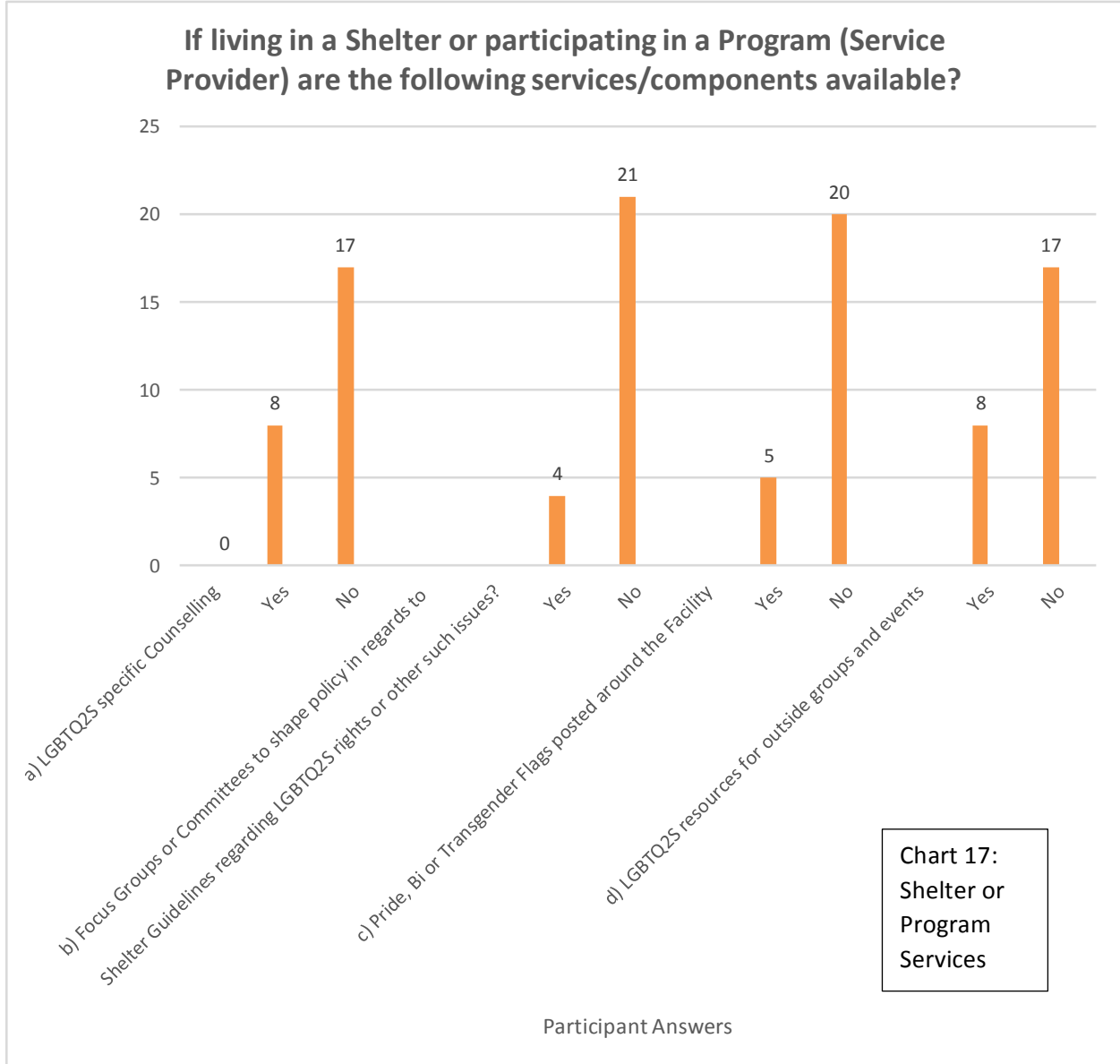


Chart 16: H/F
program respect
for S/O &
Gender Diversity

Of the 12 participants who were living in a Housing First program, 10 stated that they were treated respectfully in regards to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Question 19



There was a large rate of LGBTQ2S services not promoted in the shelter system.

Analysis

These results are similar to research previously conducted. Ecker (2017) recommends the following:

1. Develop housing that meets the needs of LGBTQ2S individuals. A wide range of housing options should be created, such as emergency shelters and congregate supportive housing, but the emphasis should be placed on permanent independent living with supports. Housing interventions should be

piloted on a small-scale prior to full implementation across the sector. Protect the rights of transgender, gender non-conforming, and Two-Spirit individuals

2. Enhance the training and support needs of staff in the homeless serving sector
3. Formalize policies that entrench LGBTQ2S rights within the homeless service sector, both at municipal and agency levels. Ensure that LGBTQ2S adults with lived experience of homelessness are part of this policy development
4. Address the multiple layers of oppression that individuals may face using an intersectional approach
5. Develop a weekly drop-in for LGBTQ2S adults in the community
6. Collaborate with the LGBTQ2S youth sector.
7. Develop allyship training opportunities for non-LGBTQ2S adults in the Homeless Serving Sector
8. Collect formalized data on gender identity and sexual orientation within intake procedures
9. Ensure that LGBTQ2S staff members are supported within the sector
10. Develop and grow the LGBTQ2S advisory committee and expand it to include greater representation from those with lived experience of homelessness and ensure that there is gender parity (e.g., transgender individuals, gender non-conforming individuals)

Question 20

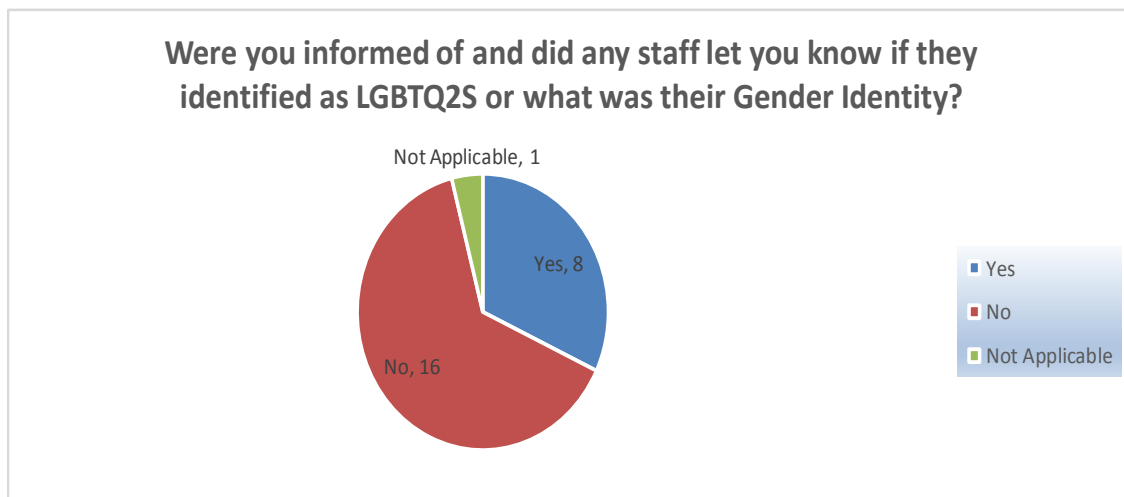


Chart 18:
Did Staff Identify their S/O or Gender Identity?

Eight participants were informed of, or knew, staff that identified as LGBTQ2S.

CONCLUSION

The results from the Needs Assessment Survey with the 25 participants, provide evidence that shelter staff and management need more training on LGBTQ2S issues. Participants shared that the voices and stories of individuals with lived experience were important in-service delivery.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION DEFINITION

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess.

Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts and values difference.

Diversity and inclusion are about capturing the uniqueness of the individual; creating an environment that values and respects individuals for their talents, skills and abilities to the benefit of the collective (<https://ccdi.ca/our-story/diversity-defined/>).

HELPFUL ADVICE FOR ALL AGENCIES, SERVICES PROVIDER AND SHELTERS

Based upon the results from the survey, the following recommendations were developed:

1. Anti-discrimination policies should be implemented within organizations to prevent discrimination based on sexual or gender identity/expression and allow LGBTQ2S individuals feel welcome within their temporary or permanent home.
2. Staff should formalize policies that entrench LGBTQ2S rights within the homeless service sector, both at municipal and agency levels. Ensure that LGBTQ2S adults with lived experience of homelessness are part of this policy development
 - It is helpful to set-up at 'Client/Resident Advisory Committee' to discuss these issues plus many others issues that influence their particular Agency and the residents to formalize policy and be included in research. It would be advantageous to have this Committee involved in the Community at large; to participate in events such as Pride, a great way to build relationships and understanding
3. Intake forms should include more than binary options; and staff should use inclusive language, such as asking for pronoun preferences
4. Programs and facilities should be more inclusive and not be segregated in binary genders
5. Organizations should hire individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S, or those who have experience working with LGBTQ2S individuals, to create more inclusive environments
6. There must be collaboration with all service providers, shelters and system of care agencies to promote these values
7. All residents must be supported by agencies across the homeless serving sector, but some have recounted interactions with staff that were homophobic, biphobic, and/or transphobic.
8. Residents must be supported to feel comfortable to disclose their gender identity and expression and their sexual orientation with all staff.

9. All residents should feel safe with engagement with other residents and be supported by staff when situations arise.
10. LGBTQ2S cultural competency training should be mandatory. This type of training provides information about working LGBTQ2S individuals in a supportive way. This type of training is a focused response to prevent and end LGBTQ2S homelessness in agencies accessed by youth and adults, and while use has been increasing, it is not always offered or mandatory for staff. Offering this type of knowledge and training can empower staff to intervene when situations of homophobia and transphobia arise.

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THANK YOU

There is so many individuals to thank in their assistance with my work.

Let me start with the most important - my participants. The journeys they have shared with me have been emotional, inspiring and powerful and I am forever in their debt. These folks opened up to me with very personal information and trusted me. I will not break that trust and share their identity with anyone. To share such personal stories about their homelessness, sexual orientation and gender identities is tough to do and divulging that information to a complete stranger is huge.

To all my family, friends and colleagues who guided me in this project, you have been a sane voice and provided me with much needed support and love in a project that at times I thought would never be completed.

The Doctors. I will not mention names but suffice to say I know many doctors and experts in research. I did not get an endorsement from any of these folks but instead I received guidance, support and research when requested. They also taught me a thing or two on how to undertake a project of this size and see it through to fruition and eventual completion.

And to all the future funders whoever they maybe. Thank you for seeing the significance of this project and how important it is for our homeless community and to those who identify as LGBTQ2S.

And last but not least to my wife and my step-daughter whose love and support are with me every single day. They never let me give up on this and their gentle push is what I needed to keep going when things looked impossible. Ladies, I could not live without you.

Please note that as of this writing I have never received any funding for this project. I paid for the Needs Assessment Survey honorariums with my own funds.

Now with the information in this report and the research previously obtained, I have designed a Training Plan titled: ***"Information & Research for the Homeless Service Sector to serve LGBTQ2S Persons"***.

My thanks to one and all,

In gratitude,

Hilary Chapple, Community Leader
Homeless/Poverty and LGBTQ2S Advocate