Putting 2SGBMSM Well-being on the Policy Radar

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Purpose

• The overall goal of this community-based research project was to document mental health and well-being needs in the 2SGBMSM community from their perspective.

Objectives

• Conduct a community-based environmental scan of current government policies, funded programs, and services available to 2SGBMSM in Ontario;

• Facilitate focus groups with Alliance members to discuss gaps in services, how they are being addressed, and what changes are needed;

• Present the results of this research to a forum of ASOs, service providers, and community members; and

• Work with the GMSH to summarize findings in order to influence policy makers and service providers.
Findings

GMSH is doing valuable work

2SGBMSM well-being is still underserved
  - Mental health
  - Social determinants of health
  - Access to PrEP
  - Service providers’ “comfort” dealing with queer sex
  - Services in non-urban areas

Organizational stress is a problem
  - Low salaries, high turnover
  - BIPOC communities are underserved and marginalized
  - Barriers from senior management and funders to 2SGBMSM advocacy work
  - High competition for limited resources

There is a lack of specific LGBTQ+ wellness policies

COVID has impacted wellness and wellness services
Three areas of need were identified by GMSH, from funders, and from policy makers:

- Participants had suggestions for GMSH resource development and activities such as a detailed needs assessment/evaluation.
- Funders need to recognize the inadequacy of funding for salaries and services for these organizations.
- Policy makers should consider specific LGBTQ+ wellness policy which provides an opportunity for advocacy.
Two-day workshop for GMSH Alliance members on community development and advocacy skills to begin to mobilize a movement.