

Employment support services for LGBTQ+ individuals

? Questions

- What are the best practices for providing LGBTQ+ specific employment support?
- How do these models/best practices differ for transgender people and LGBTQ+ newcomers to Canada?
- What are the barriers LGBTQ+ people face when seeking, gaining and maintaining employment?

🔑 Key Take-Home Messages

- Discrimination creates a significant barrier for LGBTQ+ individuals in many stages of their career development (1–5).
- Experiences of discrimination in the workplace differ between LGBTQ+ individuals and are often influenced by one's shared membership in other marginalized groups (3).
- While there are no specific best practices for providing employment support for LGBTQ+ clients, recommendations are provided from various sources for career development practitioners working with these populations (4, 6–10), including specific recommendations for transgender individuals (10, 11) and LGBTQ+ newcomers to Canada (12).

! The Issue and Why It's Important

There are many terms used to describe people who are non-heterosexual or gender non-conforming (13), which are classified by individual identities, behaviours, and attractions. This review will use the term LGBTQ+ when discussing individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or any gender and/or sexual diversity in general.

In recent years, there have been significant gains in advancing the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals (14). For example, Bill C-16 updated the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code in 2017 to include “gender identity and gender expression” as protected groups from discrimination (15). This also made discrimination

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3. Gates TG, Viggiani PA. Understanding lesbian, gay, and bisexual worker stigmatization: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. 2014;34(5):359–74.
4. Chen CP, Keats A. Career development and counselling needs of LGBTQ high school students. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*. 2016;44(5):576–88.
5. Fric K. Access to the labour market for gays and lesbians: Research review. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*. 2017;29(4):319–61.

based on gender identity and gender expression a criminal offence (15). Despite these advances, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) reports that discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals is still widespread around the globe, and same-sex relations are still criminalized in some countries (16).

With regards to employment equity, over 70 countries prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation, including Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (16). Employer organizations are increasingly adopting policies supportive to LGBTQ+ individuals, which include sexual orientation and gender identity non-discrimination policies, domestic partner and transgender-inclusive benefits, inclusive diversity training, employee resource groups, and public commitment to the LGBTQ+ community (17). Yet, according to the 2014 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety, 31% of gay and lesbian people and 39% of bisexual individuals reported experiencing some form of discrimination in the last five years, with the work environment most commonly reported as the place where their discrimination occurred (18). According to the TransPULSE project, which gathered data on the social determinants of health among transgender people from focus groups and a survey of 433 transgender individuals in Ontario, transgender individuals nearly universally report that they have experienced some type of everyday transphobia (19).

Research has shown that in supportive work environments, LGBTQ+ workers have better health outcomes, increased job satisfaction, greater likelihood of disclosing identity, and greater commitment to their jobs, compared to LGBTQ+ workers who do not have supportive work environments (20). As LGBTQ+ individuals comprise a valuable part of the global talent pool, it is important for researchers and career development practitioners to understand the unique employment experiences of this group (21), and work towards improving the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace. This review explores the barriers LGBTQ+ people experience in seeking, gaining, and maintaining employment, as well as best practices in offering employment support services.

What We Found

Barriers to employment

Overall, numerous reviews described the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in general. We identified a few primary studies on the experiences of transgender or gender transitioning individuals. No studies were found that specifically focused on the experiences of bisexual, intersex, gender queer, two-spirited, or other diversities. One systematic review noted the paucity of research on the career experiences of bisexual, intersex and gender queer individuals, and

6. Canadian Council for Career Development. Areas of specialization: Career counselling. Available from: http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career_dev/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Career-Counselling.pdf Accessed November 21, 2018: Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners; 2012.

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11. O'Neil ME, McWhirter EH, Cerezo A. Transgender identities and gender variance in vocational psychology: Recommendations for practice, social advocacy, and research. *Journal of Career Development*. 2008;34(3):286-308.

12. Choby A, Fischer L. Provisioning settlement services for LGBTQ newcomers to Edmonton: Identifying needs and best practices. Available from: <http://refugee-alberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Provisioning-Settlement-Services-for-LGBTQ-Newcomers.pdf> Accessed November 21, 2018: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers; 2016.

the need to more clearly understand these experiences (1). The included studies highlighted discrimination as the overarching barrier to employment for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Within the workplace, heterosexist prejudice can manifest in two ways: “Formal” job discrimination is the discrimination of individuals with regard to job outcomes, such as selection, retention, promotion, or termination based primarily on one’s sexual orientation or gender identity (22). There are often laws, organizational policies, or social norms against this type of discrimination. “Interpersonal” discrimination involves the negative treatment of individuals in the workplace in ways that are not directly tied to job outcomes, such as social interactions with coworkers. It is challenging to be formally disciplined for this kind of discrimination, as it is subtler in nature than formal discrimination (22). Both forms of prejudice can be destructive and psychologically damaging (2).

The experiences of discrimination in the workplace differ between LGBTQ+ individuals and are often influenced by one’s shared membership in other marginalized groups (3). Sex, gender identity, gender expression, “outness” at work, education, social class, race and ethnicity, are just some of the variables that can intersect and influence workplace experiences of discrimination. How one identifies as LGBTQ+ can also impact these experiences (3). For example, an individual who identifies as gender non-conforming, will likely experience discrimination differently than an individual who is cisgender or gender-conforming. However, it is important to note that discrimination is not experienced by all LGBTQ+ individuals equally (3). Furthermore, the effects of these variables are not simply separate from one another, but interactive (9).

The following sections outline the ways in which discrimination creates barriers to LGBTQ+ individuals along the career trajectory as described by studies found in our search.

Choosing career paths

A 2016 literature review suggested that discrimination can begin to present barriers to career development for LGBTQ+ individuals as early as high school (4). Authors explain that many LGBTQ+ students struggle with hidden minority status and internalized homophobia. Negative feelings can be reinforced if parents, teachers, and counsellors perceive these students as lagging behind, and hinder the constructive integration of sexual self-identity and vocational self-identity. LGBTQ+ high school students are commonly victimized by their peers, whether they are openly identified as LGBTQ+ or not. Hostile learning environments directly influence potential for success, which may lead to academic withdrawal, and diminished self-belief in achievement. The perception of LGBTQ+ students is that they receive less support and guidance for their career planning efforts than heterosexual students; generally,

13. Sasso T, Ellard-Gray A. In and out: Diverging perspectives on LGBT inclusion in the workplace. Available from: <https://ccdi.ca/media/1070/20150528-report-lgbt-inclusion-in-the-workplace-en.pdf> Accessed November 21, 2018; Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion; 2015.

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15. Public Services and Procurement Canada. Support for trans employees: A guide for employees and managers. Available from: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.843076/publication.html> Accessed November 21, 2018; Government of Canada; 2017.

16. Carroll A. State-sponsored homophobia: A world survey of sexual orientation laws, criminalisation, protection and recognition. Geneva: International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association 2016.

17. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Corporate equality index 2018: Rating workplaces on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer equality. Washington, D.C.: HRC Business Advisory Council; 2017.

18. Simpson L. Violent victimization of lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Canada, 2014. Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54923-eng.htm> Accessed November 21, 2018; Statistics Canada; 2018.

19. Bauer G, Scheim A. Transgender people in Ontario, Canada: Statistics to inform human rights policy. London, ON: TransPULSE; 2015.

high schools fail to provide appropriate role models for LGBTQ+ students. Some may feel that their career choices are hindered due to safety concerns. Students may have a clear career interest but avoid pursuing this out of fear that it will place them in a hostile work environment. Additionally, personal interests may be limited to stereotypical occupations due to heterosexist biases in popular career assessment tools (4).

A 2015 systematic review of 145 studies on the careers and workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ workers describes how LGBTQ+ individuals develop identity management strategies due to actual or anticipated discrimination (1). Studies in this review showed that identity management strategies (i.e. the ways through which LGBTQ+ individuals withhold or discuss information about their sexual/gender identity) affected career development decisions of LGBTQ+ workers, such that certain occupations were perceived as inappropriate. This may result in LGBTQ+ individuals avoiding certain career paths. Discrimination in school also had an impact on LGBTQ+ youth, resulting in higher rates of absenteeism, which may impact future career development opportunities. LGBTQ+ youth also felt restricted in their vocational choices, recognizing that stereotypical occupations may offer a safer work environment (i.e. less or no discrimination), as opposed to other professions. Finally, LGBTQ+ youth felt that they were lacking relatable role models (1).

Gaining employment

A 2017 systematic review of 48 studies investigated the bias that gay men and lesbians face when accessing the labour market (5). In two-thirds of the reviewed studies, authors found that gay and lesbian applicants faced discrimination when accessing employment. This research strongly indicated that, compared to heterosexual applicants, gay and lesbian individuals are treated more negatively in interviews and had lower call-back probability. In turn, they may lead to negative labour market outcomes, such as higher unemployment probability, of gay and lesbian people, compared to heterosexuals (5).

Another systematic review from 2015 explored the career and workplace experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in the workforce (1). Authors found that when applying for a job, individuals must purposely exclude qualifications that may 'tip-off' one's identity to an employer, in order to avoid discrimination in the hiring process. For example, one study in the review demonstrated how the inclusion of relevant experience in LGBTQ+ campus organizations or clubs on entry-level job applications had a significant negative effect on the success of applicants (23). The exclusion of such qualifications, some of which may have potentially enhanced the job application, pose a barrier to gaining employment. In several U.S. states, signaling that one is LGBTQ+ may reduce the chances of receiving a positive response from employers (1).

20. Badgett M, Durso LE, Mallory C, Kastanis A. The business impact of LGBT-supportive workplace policies. 2013.

21. Ozturk MB, Tatli A. Gender identity inclusion in the workplace: Broadening diversity management research and practice through the case of transgender employees in the UK. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 2016;27(8):781–802.

22. Hebl MR, Foster JB, Mannix LM, Dovidio JF. Formal and interpersonal discrimination: A field study of bias toward homosexual applicants. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*. 2002;28(6):815–25.

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26. Brotman S, Lee E. *Speak out! Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer refugees in Canada: Exploring intersections of sexual, gender and cultural diversity*. Research Report. Montreal: McGill University; 2010.

This may be especially true for individuals who have gone through gender-transition. Statistics from the TransPULSE project showed that 18% of participants had been turned down for a job for being transgender (19). Twenty-eight percent of participants were unable to get employment references with their current name or pronoun, and 58% could not get academic transcripts with the right name or sex designation. This creates a barrier, as transgender individuals are unable to draw on their job histories to strengthen their applications without disclosing their transgender status (19).

The TransPULSE project also found that 17% of participants declined jobs they were offered, because they feared discrimination in the workplace (19).

LGBTQ+ newcomers may have lower educational achievement and work experience compared to the general population due to discrimination faced in their countries of origin (24). They may face more complex discrimination during job searches, due to intersecting prejudices related to anti-immigrant sentiment, or factors such as race and religion, compared to other LGBTQ+ individuals (24). In the Canadian context, discrimination against newcomers can be hidden behind the standard hiring practice of requiring “Canadian work experience” (24, 25) despite the fact that the Human Rights Commission has identified this requirement as discriminatory (25). As a result, many LGBTQ+ newcomers require income support while waiting for work permits, and experience this as stigmatizing (25, 26).

Career advancement

Fear of discrimination leading to the concealment of sexual or gender identity in the workplace was described in some studies as a barrier to career advancement.

One literature review, conducted in 2017, suggested that concealing LGBTQ+ identity at work was related to avoidance of workplace-related social networking opportunities (where one may be expected to bring a significant other or talk about personal lives), leading to the loss of career advancement opportunities, and ultimately affecting advancement and pay (27).

A 2015 systematic review described how concealing LGBTQ+ identity in the workplace can have a large cognitive toll, possibly interfering with day-to-day work (1). This may impact networking and workplace relationships, ultimately affecting performance evaluations and career development.

Stress related to the workplace has been shown to be related to perceived discrimination, stigma consciousness, concealing identity, and internalized heterosexism (2). Results demonstrated increased turnover intentions, decreased organizational commitment,

27. DeSouza ER, Wesselmann ED, Ispas D. Workplace Discrimination against Sexual Minorities: Subtle and not-so-subtle. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne des Sciences de l'Administration*. 2017;34(2):121–32.

28. Dietert M, Dentice D. Gender identity issues and workplace discrimination: The transgender experience. *Journal of Workplace Rights*. 2009;14(1):121–40.

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31. Thoroughgood CN, Sawyer KB, Webster JR. What lies beneath: How paranoid cognition explains the relations between transgender employees' perceptions of discrimination at work and their job attitudes and wellbeing. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 2017;103:99–112.

32. Cass V. *Sexual orientation identity formation: A Western phenomenon*. Arlington, VA, USA: American Psychiatric Association; 1996.

33. Chung YB, Williams W, Dispenza F. Validating work discrimination and coping strategy models for sexual minorities. *The Career Development Quarterly*. 2009;58(2):162–70.

increased absenteeism and withdrawal behaviours, and lower job satisfaction among LGBTQ+ workers.

Transgender individuals may face further discrimination related to how they express gender identity when transitioning in the workplace (28). A qualitative study exploring the workplace experiences of a sample of male-identified transgender individuals (n=26) found that a lack of support from work peers and upper management during the transition process (such as not being acknowledged by their chosen names or pronouns) made it difficult to function in their workplaces and created a stressful work environment (28).

One study based on in-depth interviews with transgender individuals in the UK found that stressors related to the transition process can have disruptive outcomes for career development (21). Due to length of the transition process and costs, individuals often remained in paid employment during a significant part of their transition. The visibility of their non-conforming gender identity exposed participants to discrimination in all aspects of the employment process, starting from selection and recruitment. Some participants explained that even if colleagues or human resources departments attempted to engage with transgender issues, the knowledge deficit in human resources processes and of organisational actors in assisting transgender employees were a key barrier to achieving equality, diversity and inclusion at work (21). Another qualitative study analyzing responses from transgender-identified people (n=139) found that working in environments that required specific gender presentations or contained spaces divided into gender binaries created additional stress for participants (29).

Another barrier to career development facing some LGBTQ+ individuals is wage discrimination. A 2015 systematic review found that in most countries, gay men receive wage penalties, but lesbian women sometimes get wage premiums, compared with their heterosexual counterparts (1). An analysis of the 2006 Canadian Census confirmed these results and showed that, while there is significant heterogeneity in the estimates of wage disadvantages across definitions of earnings and samples, all estimates showed that gay men experience disadvantages whereas lesbians experience advantages in the Canadian labour market (30).

Termination or quitting

The TransPULSE project reported that 13% of transgender individuals had been fired for being transgender (19). One qualitative study exploring the gender transition experiences of transgender-identified individuals (n=139) found that 20-49% of individuals stated that they experienced career crises (including termination) when management learned of their intentions to transition at work (29). Another study interviewing male-identified transgender individuals (n=26) found that participants feared that disclosing

34. Barber JS, Mobley M. Counseling gay adolescents. In: Horne AM, Kiselica MS, editors. *Handbook of Counseling Boys and Adolescent Males: A Practitioner's Guide*. Thousand Oaks, California, US: Sage Publications; 1999. p. 161–78.

35. Anderson MZ, Croteau JM, Chung YB, DiStefano TM. Developing an assessment of sexual identity management for lesbian and gay workers. *Journal of Career Assessment*. 2001;9(3):243–60.

36. Griffin P. From hiding out to coming out: Empowering lesbian and gay educators. *Journal of Homosexuality*. 1992;22(3–4):167–96.

37. Lance TS, Anderson MZ, Croteau JM. Improving measurement of workplace sexual identity management. *The Career Development Quarterly*. 2010;59(1):19–26.

38. Zimman L. 'The other kind of coming out': Transgender people and the coming out narrative genre. *Gender & Language*. 2009;3(1):53–80.

39. Grenier A, Hixson-Vulpe J. Beyond diversity: An LGBT best practice guide for employers. Available from: <https://prideatwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Beyond-Diversity-LGBT-Guide.pdf> Accessed November 21, 2018; Pride At Work Canada; 2017.

40. Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services. LGBTQ+ programs. Available from: <http://accessalliance.ca/programs-services/lgbtq-programs/> Accessed November 21, 2018; Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services; 2018.

41. Centre for Newcomers. LGBTQ+ newcomers services. Available from: <http://centrefornewcomers.ca/our-services/settling-in-canada/lgbtq-project> Accessed November 21, 2018; 2018.

their gender identity in the workplace created the risk of job loss (28).

Some of the included review articles noted that experiences of discrimination influenced intentions to leave one's employment (2), and that quitting was used as a coping strategy when faced with hostile work environments (1).

A mixed methods study analysed the results of 165 interviews of transgender individuals and found that perceived discrimination in the workplace was positively related to paranoid cognition at work (31). This was positively related to transgender employees' turnover intentions (31). Another study, based on 14 in-depth interviews with transgender individuals in the UK, found that transgender employees in industries that are particularly unwelcoming to gender identity diversity (e.g. "working class" professions) find it necessary to opt for career change when they decide to transition (21). This is often at the expense of hard-earned pay, privileges and positions (21).

Best practices for employment support service providers and career development practitioners

While no specific best practice guidelines for LGBTQ+ employment support were identified, the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners briefly describe discussion and exploration of sexual orientation and gender as a core competency during career counselling (6). The Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling, in collaboration with the American Counseling Association, also created a list of competencies for counselling LGBTQ+ individuals (7). This includes a subsection for career and lifestyle development. Further reviews and book chapters provide recommendations for career development practitioners (hereinafter referred to as "practitioners") offering services to LGBTQ+ individuals (4, 8, 9). We identified one review that offered ways career development professionals can facilitate the career decision-making process of gender transitioning individuals (10), as well as an article providing vignettes of workplace

experiences career counsellors may be presented with when working with transgender individuals, and recommendations for practice (11). In addition, one best practice guide for providing settlement services to LGBTQ+ newcomers to Canada was identified that included a specific section on employment (12).

The recommendations from guidelines, chapters, articles and reviews have been synthesized into the following themes:

Pre-counselling preparation

Before working with LGBTQ+ individuals, it is recommended that career development practitioners evaluate their awareness of LGBTQ+ worldviews and cultures (8). This includes use of culturally appropriate language (4, 8, 11) and assessing whether they are competent to provide the services requested (11). The literature highlights educating oneself on LGBTQ+ issues (9), including how systemic and institutionalized oppression against LGBTQ+ individuals may adversely affect career or create barriers for LGBTQ+ individuals in their career paths (4, 6, 7, 11), and how these experiences may be interconnected with other experiences of discrimination (7). The practitioner is advised to be aware of their own homophobic or heterosexist biases (4, 8).

Furthermore, an extensive body of resources should be built, including specific information on organizations and companies that support LGBTQ+ employees (7, 9), and information on local and federal laws surrounding discrimination (7, 9).

When working with transgender or gender-transitioning individuals specifically, it is recommended that practitioners first gain knowledge about the transition process (such as physical appearance, medical concerns, psychological adjustment, legal issues, and identity complexities) and how this may impact the career development trajectory (10, 11).

Affirmative, trusting relationships

Ensuring confidentiality of LGBTQ+ identities is extremely important (7). Counsellors need to establish a safe counselling environment and use inclusive language (4, 11). Individual needs must be met within intersecting identities, where the

cultural differences between different LGBTQ+ individuals are acknowledged (8, 9, 11).

One article outlines ways through which a trans-positive counselling setting can be created, including the display of trans-positive written materials, and gender-neutral bathroom accommodations (11).

Identity development

It is important to have an understanding of the development of sexual or gender identities (4, 8, 9), and the issues surrounding the development of self-concept in career development during adolescence (8). Recommendations include the need to create a counselling climate in which the client feels free to express identity development issues (8). Some reviews have recommended using Cass' model of Identity Formation, which includes six stages of the development of sexual orientation identities: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, Identity Pride, and Identity Synthesis (32). When using this model as a framework for career development, it is recommended that the practitioner be aware that progress through these stages may not be continuous: the time it takes to move through the different stages in the identity model can vary, there are different patterns of development between sexual orientations, and variables other than sexual orientation (e.g., gender identity, ethnicity) may account for individual differences in development (8).

For gender transitioning individuals, it is important to examine the client's comfort level with how they present their gender identity in the workplace and support clients in expressing gender congruence in order to facilitate career success (10).

Coping with discrimination

It is recommended that practitioners explore sources of job dissatisfaction (11) with their LGBTQ+ clients, discuss how discrimination may be influencing their career (8, 11, 12), and build support networks (11) and strategies (4) for coping with discrimination. Culturally appropriate self-esteem interventions such as positive self-talk, reframing, and forgiveness have

been recommended to help clients overcome internalized negative stereotypes (9). One review focusing on gender transitioning individuals recommends developing strategies that address both long- and short-term obstacles (10).

One review of career development issues among LGBTQ+ high school students describes three models, proposed by Chung and colleagues that can help practitioners conceptualise coping strategies used by LGBTQ+ individuals when faced with discrimination in their career development: Vocational Choice Strategies, Identity Management Strategies, and Discrimination Management Strategies (33). Vocational Choice strategies are used when choosing a career path. These include becoming self-employed to avoid discrimination, identifying whether a job is LGBTQ+ friendly, or risk-taking by selecting a career despite its potential for discrimination. Identity Management Strategies are used to manage the disclosure of information about LGBTQ+ status. These include acting heterosexual, constructing information to appear heterosexual, withholding information that would reveal one's identity, and "outing" oneself in the workplace context, either implicitly or explicitly. Finally, Discrimination Management Strategies are used when discrimination is encountered in the workplace. Strategies include quitting, remaining silent, seeking social support, or confrontation (33). It is emphasized that practitioners should validate the choices their clients make, and offer support in identifying the meaning of and reasons for using or not using certain coping strategies (4). Additionally, it is recommended to prepare clients to cope with other intersecting forms of discrimination including racism, sexism, ableism or ageism (9).

Tailored assessment

Practitioners should take a personal inventory of ways bias can influence the counselling process (9), career development theories, and career assessment instruments (7). The interpretation of these need to be adjusted in ways that affirm the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals (7). It is recommended that culturally appropriate assessments be used with gender transitioning individuals (10).

The client should be included in the selection of

assessment instruments and the development of an individual plan for goals and learning (8). It is recommended that practitioners engage in ongoing assessment to help clients identify and understand significant aspects of their situation and encourage clients to explore their options (6).

Job searching

It is recommended that practitioners not only provide a list of local LGBTQ+ friendly organizations, but also provide resources for locating LGBTQ+ friendly environments in the job search process (8). This includes the criteria to determine if an organization has anti-discriminatory policies, domestic partner benefit policies, diversity training, and LGBTQ+ groups (8). Practitioners should also have resources specific to gender transitioning individuals (e.g., support groups) and should be familiar with organizations and schools that include gender-identity in their non-discrimination policies (10).

The practitioner should also work to link individuals with LGBTQ+ mentors or role models (4, 7, 9), arrange career shadowing of LGBTQ+ professionals (9), and facilitate placements (4, 9), particularly in LGBTQ+ owned or operated business (9). It may be especially helpful to find role models who are successful in non-stereotypical occupations, open about their identity, or closeted to provide guidance on how to manage the expression of identity as the individual client prefers (34). Finding role models who can connect with these LGBTQ+ clients in other cultural ways, such as sharing a similar ethnicity, may also be helpful, but it is important to ask the client what type of role model they might need (34).

One article notes the difficulty career development professionals face when applying existing theories and frameworks when working with gender variant individuals, due to the lack of research on this population (11). While they should be used with caution, authors recommend drawing from existing models, such as Social Cognitive Career Counseling (11). When working with gender transitioning individuals specifically, it is recommended that the practitioner engage in collaboration and consultation with school counselors, teachers, administrators, human resources staff, personnel managers, and

employers (10), as well as seek supervision and training from professionals with extensive experience in working with gender transitioning individuals (10, 11).

Coming out

It is recommended that practitioners discuss the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing one's LGBTQ+ identity in the workplace with clients, and strategies LGBTQ+ individuals can use for the management of their identity in the workplace (9). The Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure (WSIMM) was developed in 2001 as a tool for vocational psychologists to assess strategies used by LGBTQ+ individuals to manage their identities in the workplace (35). These identity management strategies, identified in a 1992 study by Griffin (36) among lesbian and gay teachers, fall on a continuum from full concealment to full disclosure. Strategies include passing (attempting to be perceived as heterosexual), covering (censoring information to avoid being perceived as non-heterosexual), being implicitly out (being honest about one's personal life, but not explicitly labelling oneself as LGBTQ+), or being explicitly out (telling others that one identifies as LGBTQ+) (36). A study conducted in 2010 examining properties of a revised version of the WSIMM supported the usefulness of this tool for measuring sexual identity management (37). Authors do, however, recommend further research on the development of this tool, and that researchers consider assessing this tool in future vocational research with LGBTQ+ participants (37).

The practitioner can also assist in the decision of whether or not to disclose their identity by helping clients create an extensive plan (8). This includes identifying allies in the workplace, goals for coming out, and anticipated problems and how these may be solved (8).

For transgender individuals or gender varying identities, the experience of coming out is distinct from other sexual diversities that are cisgender (38). For example, experiences of coming out can differ between whether or not one has chosen to make a social transition from one gender role or another, and whether or not this transition has already occurred. On one hand, a transgender person may come out by expressing that their

gender identity is different from the gender that is perceived by others. On the other, if transition has occurred, coming out means revealing that they have previously occupied a different gender role. Furthermore, the disclosure of one's gender identity may not be a choice for some transgender individuals, as in some cases one's former gender role may be revealed by physical or aesthetic attributes (38). The identified literature did not provide specific recommendations for working with people coming out as transgender in the workplace after gender transition. Recommendations were provided, however, for working with individuals who are in the process of transitioning at work (10, 11).

When working with clients who are preparing to undergo gender transition at work, it is important for the practitioner to assist in developing a plan to facilitate a successful transition process in the workplace by examining perceptions and expectations in relation to workplace culture, and assessing coping skills and sources of support (10). It is recommended that career development professionals assist their client in reviewing the policies of their current workplace and assess the formal and informal supports offered for employees who are transitioning (11).

Advocacy

Social advocacy (4, 11) and promoting policies and practices that support diversity (6), have been identified as important in employment support for LGBTQ+ individuals. Taking an active role in challenging stereotypes (8), advocating for and with LGBTQ+ individuals (7), increasing public awareness and education (10), providing workplace sensitivity trainings for employers (11), and lobbying for the inclusion of non-discrimination policies in local businesses (9) is recommended for practitioners. It is also important for practitioners to support LGBTQ+ individuals to advocate on their own behalf for inclusive policies and practices in the workplace, among local communities, and within policy, legislation, and institutional reform (7).

Below are examples of Canadian best practice guides for employers in creating LGBTQ+ inclusive workplaces that may be useful resources for employment support practitioners in advocating

for diversity and anti-discrimination in local businesses:

- **Pride at Work Canada** – “Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers” (39)
- **Public Services and Procurement Canada** – “Support for Trans Employees: A guide for Employees and Managers” (15).

Some examples of organizations that provide resources and support for LGBTQ+ newcomers in Canada that may be useful when providing services:

- **Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services** – “LGBTQ+ programs” (40)
- **Centre for Newcomers** – “LGBTQ+ newcomers services” (41).



Factors That May Impact Local Applicability

While studies included in the review emphasized the importance in recognizing the individual experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, there was a dearth of literature exploring the specific experiences of transgender or gender transitioning individuals and no studies were found that specifically focused on the experiences of bisexual, intersex, gender queer, two-spirited, or other diversities. Furthermore, there was no literature exploring the career development experiences of indigenous individuals, LGBTQ+ people of colour, or other marginalized identities. Determining best practices that are specific to these groups would be an important addition to the literature.

It is also important to consider the national context within which employment support services are offered, as anti-discrimination laws differ between countries. For example, there is no federal law protecting the rights of employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the United States (17).



What We Did

We searched Scopus and Web of Science using a combination of title terms (gay* OR lesbian* OR transgender* OR transsexual* OR lgbt* OR [sexual AND orientation] OR [men AND who AND have AND sex AND with] OR msm) and (work* OR employ* OR job* OR labor* OR labour*). All searches were conducted on September 18, 2018 and results limited to English articles published from 2008 to present. Reference lists of identified literature reviews and systematic reviews were also searched. Web-sites of various Canadian and international governmental and non-governmental organizations were also searched. The search yielded 876 references from which 41 studies were included. Sample sizes of primary studies ranged from 35 to 521.

Rapid Response: Evidence into Action

The OHTN Rapid Response Service offers quick access to research evidence to help inform decision making, service delivery and advocacy. In response to a question from the field, the Rapid Response Team reviews the scientific and grey literature, consults with experts, and prepares a brief fact sheet summarizing the current evidence and its implications for policy and practice.

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