

FACT SHEET: The Disproportionate Impact of COVID 19 on LGBTQ2+ Communities

A summary of research from StatisticsCanada

SPECTRUM
Waterloo Region's
Rainbow Community Space

In Spring of 2020, Statistics Canada conducted a study of the impacts of COVID 19 on the mental health of Canadians. This study found that gender diverse people -people who didn't report their gender as exclusively male or female -felt far greater negative health impacts from the pandemic.

Almost 70% of gender-diverse participants reported fair/poor mental health, compared with 25.5% of female participants and 21.2% of male participants. Gender-diverse people were 2 times more likely than women to report symptoms of anxiety, and 3 times more likely than men.

Economic marginalization is a likely key contributing factor to these poor mental health outcomes:

- Gender-diverse respondents were somewhat more likely (10.6 -12.5% more likely) to agree or strongly agree that they might lose their job or main source of income in the next four weeks.
- Gender-diverse respondents were also more likely to report that they had in fact lost their job or business in the last four weeks (14.6% vs. 8.6% and 7.7%, respectively)
- Gender-diverse respondents were 1.6 times more likely to report that COVID-19 had a "moderate" or "major" impact on their ability to meet their financial obligations or essential needs, such as rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and groceries.
- According to a 2018 survey, the age and gender distribution of the LGBTQ2+ population in Canada was also associated with higher risk for experiencing loss of employment.
- The average income of LGBTQ2+ workers is lower than non-LGBTQ2+ workers. LGBTQ2+ Canadians are also significantly over-represented among low-income earners.

Sources: Impact of COVID-19 on Canadians -Your Mental Health, StatisticsCanada.; Vulnerabilities related to COVID-19 among LGBTQ2+ Canadians, StatisticsCanada

THE IMPACTS OF HOUSING INSECURITY

In order to isolate safely at home, a person must have access to safe housing. Furthermore, people experiencing homelessness face additional risks from COVID-19 and associated complications. However, LGBTQ2+ people have higher rates of housing insecurity:

In a 2018 study, LGBTQ2+ Canadians were more than twice as likely to have experienced some type of homelessness or housing insecurity in their lifetime (27% vs. 13%, respectively).

LGBTQ2+ Canadians were 2.3 times as likely to report having to temporarily live somewhere other than home because they were leaving an abusive or violent situation (7% versus 3%).

Rejection from the parents increases the risk of homelessness among LGBTQ2+ youth.

