

THE LATEST: Conversion Therapy & SOGIECE in Canada

Sex Now Survey results reveal prevalence of change efforts

February 2020 – As many as **one in five** sexual minority men (gay, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit and queer or “GBT2Q”) report having ever experienced sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression change efforts (SOGIECE) – and of them, nearly **40 per cent** (or as many as **47,000 GBT2Q men in Canada**) have experienced conversion therapy, interim [Sex Now Survey](#) findings show.

QUICK FACTS



20 per cent of sexual minority men report having experienced SOGIECE



Proportionately more **younger men** report SOGIECE exposure, as well as **trans and non-binary** respondents



SOGIECE prevalence was high (15 per cent or greater) in **all provinces and territories**

8%

8 per cent of total men surveyed report experiences of conversion therapy



SOGIECE exposure was associated with various psychosocial outcomes – such as **depression, anxiety, social isolation** and **delayed coming out**

7,200

More than **7,200 sexual minority** men in Canada responded to the survey

THE SURVEY

The Sex Now Survey, often referred to as “Canada’s gay census,” is the country’s largest and longest-running survey on GBT2Q men’s health. Conducted by the [Community Based Research Centre](#), Sex Now has become an essential source of data and is widely used by community, public health, research and policy stakeholders.

THE PROBLEM

Conversion therapy (also known as “reparative therapy”) is a harmful, fraudulent and scientifically discredited form of treatment which falls into a broader categorization of “SOGIECE” (sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression change efforts). While conversion therapy refers to organized, sustained efforts, SOGIECE includes any direction or advice that intentionally delays or impedes self-acceptance of someone’s gender identity or sexual orientation.

THE FINDINGS

Interim Sex Now Survey results (collected from November 1, 2019 to January 18, 2020) find that 20 per cent of surveyed sexual minority men in Canada report having experienced SOGIECE. This includes pressure (formal and informal) by licensed health providers, counselors and faith-based authority figures.

Additionally, more younger men reported SOGIECE exposure compared with older men — suggesting SOGIECE remains a prevalent concern for Canadian youth. Likewise, many more trans and non-binary respondents report experiencing SOGIECE compared to their cisgender peers.

SOGIECE also affects Canadians and Indigenous communities everywhere – with prevalence high (15 per cent or greater) in all provinces and territories. Further, 8 per cent of men surveyed report experiences of conversion therapy.

As other research supports, SOGIECE was associated with various psychosocial outcomes – specifically more depressive and more anxious symptomology, coming out later in life, and less social support.

WHY THIS MATTERS

While Sex Now contains important information on a wide array of issues impacting the health of sexual minority men, these SOGIECE findings are being shared early to inform immediate policy action – including the proposed federal conversion therapy ban. These new 2019 estimates show that as many as 47,000 GBT2Q men (or 8% of GBT2Q in Canada) have experienced conversion therapy, which is significantly higher than previous estimates of 20,000.

To protect people from this cruel treatment **all levels of government should work to undermine the efforts of people and organizations conducting SOGIECE** through both legislative bans and positive, affirming programs or campaigns.

Additionally, governments can better support survivors of SOGIECE, as well as funding research and community-led movements aiming to better understand the reach of conversion efforts in Canada.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Questions about SOGIECE and conversion therapy can be directed to:

- ▶ [Travis Salway](#), Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Health Sciences

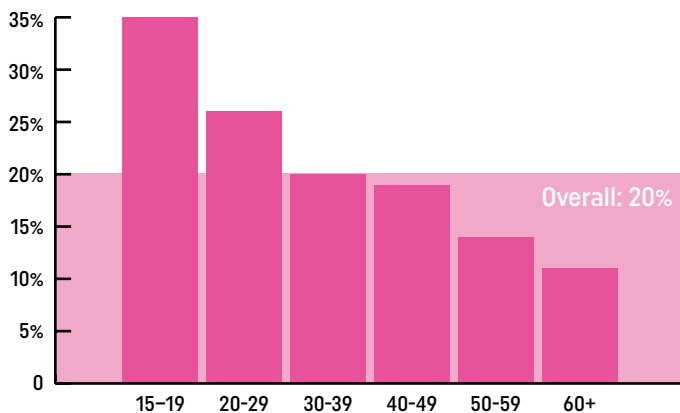
Questions about the Sex Now Survey and CBRC can be directed to:

- ▶ [Nathan Lachowsky](#), Sex Now Principal Investigator and Research Director, CBRC
- ▶ [Michael Kwag](#), Knowledge Exchange and Policy Development Director, CBRC

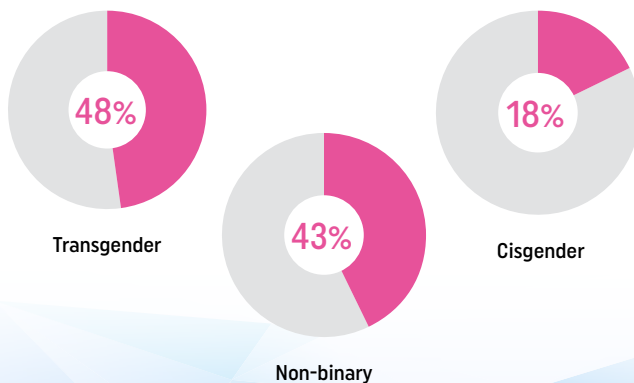
EXPOSURE TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION CHANGE EFFORTS

% OF GBT2Q MEN* EXPOSED TO SOGIECE

By Age



By Gender Identity



By Province & Territories

British Columbia	23%
Alberta	22%
Saskatchewan	20%
Manitoba	26%
Ontario	22%
Quebec	15%
New Brunswick	19%
Prince Edward Island	19%
Nova Scotia	17%
Newfoundland & Labrador	24%
Territories	28%

In total, 7259 sexual minority men responded to the Sex Now Survey over a period of almost three months. These figures are based on a partial cut of the data, and estimates will change as data collection are complete.

**as well as non-binary respondents.*