



## **Position Statement #1**

### **Incorporating 2SLGBTIQQA+<sup>1</sup> Education into Nursing Curriculum in Canada**

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**Submitted By:** Nicholas Alves, Centennial College; Emilie Hay, McMaster University

**Edited By:** Courtney Blake, North Island College;

### **Introduction and Background Information**

2SLGBTIQQA+<sup>1</sup> (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Pansexual, and many more)<sup>2</sup> consists of a wide range of genders, sexes, races, ethnic groups and individuals. There are specific vocabulary, terms, facts and training related to 2SLGBTQ+<sup>3</sup> people that are not taught in the nursing curriculum and therefore make it difficult for nursing students to provide compassionate, holistic, patient-centered care to members of this population.

While the 2SLGBTQ+<sup>3</sup> population has been identified as an equity seeking<sup>4</sup> population, minimal measures are being taken to specifically address their vulnerability (Daley & MacDonnell, 2011). The stigmatization, oppression, and discrimination experienced by this population contribute to a higher rate of substance use and abuse and other health issues (McKay, 2011). 2SLGBTQ+<sup>3</sup> people may seem to represent a relatively low percentage of the population (5-10%), however, in Ontario alone it is estimated that up to 1.25 million people anticipate or face barriers to access health services (Daley & MacDonnell, 2011). 2SLGBTQ+<sup>3</sup> youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide, and three times more likely to have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence<sup>5</sup> than heterosexual youth (Pies, 2011).

Additionally, it is estimated that approximately 57% of transgender people are rejected by their families, 41% have attempted suicide, and 19% reported experiencing homelessness as a result of their gender identity (Pies, 2011)

### **Canadian Nursing Students' Association's Current Position on the Issue**

As the Canadian Nursing Students' Association (CNSA) is the national voice of student nurses in Canada, and one of its underlying principles is to influence and advance innovation in the nursing curriculum, the CNSA believes it is vital for education pertaining to the 2SLGBTQ+<sup>3</sup> population be integrated into nursing curriculum across the nation. Nursing students are responsible for providing appropriate nursing care to all clients, so it is imperative that the specific needs of this population be met (CNSA, 2005). As future professionals in the healthcare setting, advocating for the nursing profession and ensuring quality healthcare for all Canadians is a fundamental part of caring for different minority groups seen within this country.



Although there are currently low numbers of homophobia among nursing students, there are a larger number of students who show ambivalent and heterosexist attitudes towards 2SLGBTQ<sup>+</sup> people (Lim & Bernstein, 2012). Through proper education and training specific to this population, nursing students can be better equipped to create an environment in which clients feel safe to release any personal information pertaining to their healthcare needs, without feeling judged. Proper education and training will promote sexual orientation and gender identity awareness and allow nursing students to provide culturally competent care by showing openness, using inclusive language, and normalizing disclosure of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Due to large numbers of nurses present in healthcare, and by virtue of their scope of practice, nurses are in a position to bridge the gaps found in health inequities and provide culturally sensitive care specific to the 2SLGBTQ<sup>+</sup> community (McKay, 2011). Educating nursing students of inclusive language and knowledge of the unique issues experienced by the 2SLGBTQ<sup>+</sup> population will help correct the insensitive and uninformed care 2SLGBTQ<sup>+</sup> people are currently experiencing (Lim & Bernstein, 2012).

### **Canadian Stakeholder Involvement**

The CNSA believes in actively engaging stakeholders, including nursing schools and nursing organizations, in developing new areas of nursing curriculum and practice opportunities to prepare nursing students to provide safe, competent, ethical care for the 2SLGBTQ<sup>+</sup> community.

### **Relation to Canadian Nursing School Curriculums**

As nursing students are required to learn and care for minority groups, CNSA accept this as their formal position on incorporating 2SLGBTQ<sup>+</sup> education into nursing curriculum throughout Canada. Regional Directors will support nursing students in promoting this change in their nursing curriculum, and/or program. CNSA will suggest and coordinate educational activities to help promote awareness and bridge this gap in healthcare inequality.

### **References**

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Pies, C. (2011). Improving the Health of LGBT People: How Being Counted Counts. *Women's Health Activist*, 36(6), 1-7.

Rainbow Health Ontario. (2009). Because LGBT Health Matters. Retrieved from <http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/about/mission.cfm>

### Edits

1. Changed from LGBTTIIPQQ2SAA+ to 2SLGBTIQQA+ for clarity. The new abbreviation is more widely known within the queer community. Throughout the statement, 2SLGBTQ+ is used as a short form for 2SLGBTIQQA+.
2. Changed acronym and examples;
  - a. Removed Transsexual. While this term is still used by some in the 2SLGBTQ+ community, it is an older term that many in the transgender community do not use, as it is often confused with transgender. Transsexual places emphasis on genitalia, specifically in terms of surgical alteration, while transgender instead focuses on the gender identity of the individual, specifically that it differs from the gender assigned at birth. This means that the term transsexual refers to a single group of people, whereas the term transgender is an umbrella term that includes a wide variety of individuals, including those that identify as transsexual. There is significant push within the trans community to move away from conversations surrounding genitalia, as these conversations are highly sensitive and not reflective of the holistic needs of transgender individuals. Additionally, many individuals who identify as transgender find the term transsexual offensive.
  - b. Removed Ally. The 2SLGBTQ+ acronym is representative of the various identities found within the queer community, but allyship is an action, not an identity. Being an ally is not something that someone decides for themselves, it is decided by members of equity seeking groups, based on the individuals' actions, and whether they have the trust of the community or not. When people use allyship as an identity, the emphasis on behaviours and actions are diminished, and motives are called into question. Additionally, it is well known there is an "A" in the 2SLGBTQ+ acronym, and when people believe that belongs to allies, it erases the identity of Asexual and Aromantic individuals. Allies are also not oppressed in the same manner as 2SLGBTQ+ individuals by means of their heterosexual privilege; including them in discussions of stigma, oppression, and



discrimination demeans the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people.

- c. Added additional identities: Asexual, Pansexual
3. 2SLGBT to 2SLGBTQ+
4. Vulnerable to equity seeking. “[The term “vulnerable”] is criticized because it under emphasizes the multi-dimensional processes that cause unequal distributions of material, cultural, social and political resources. Furthermore, characterization of susceptibility and vulnerability can be disempowering”  
[http://nccdh.ca/images/uploads/Population\\_EN\\_web2.pdf](http://nccdh.ca/images/uploads/Population_EN_web2.pdf)
5. Change “dating violence and rape” to “domestic and/or sexual violence”