CAAT Community Alliance for Accessible Treatment

Rainbow Resilience

# Rainbow Resilience Needs Assessment Report

LGBTQ+ immigrants, refugees, newcomers, and non-status (IRNN) individuals experience barriers to care that exist at the intersection of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, language, and immigration status.

**Yet very little research has focused on these overlapping experiences.**

## Research Questions

- What are the **key gaps in resources, knowledge, or system capacity** that limit effective HIV/HCV and sexual health service delivery for LGBTQ+ IRNN?
- What **barriers and challenges do LGBTQ+ IRNN face** in accessing HIV/HCV and sexual health services in Ontario?
- What **changes to services, systems, or policies would most improve access** to affirming, equitable, and culturally responsive HIV/HCV and sexual health care for LGBTQ+ IRNN in Ontario?

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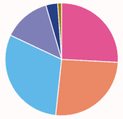
## Who We Heard From

**198 Participants**
102 Service Providers
96 Service Users

**14 Interviews**
**14 Focus Groups**
**83 Surveys**

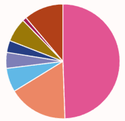
**30+ Organizations**
ASOs, CBOs, Healthcare Providers, etc.

### Immigration Status



- Work/Study Permit Holder
- Permanent Resident
- Canadian Citizen
- Refugee/Asylum Seeker
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

### Sexual Orientation



- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Asexual
- Multiple Selected
- Pansexual
- Heterosexual

### Service Provider Type

- Frontline Service Provider
- Policy/Advocacy Professional
- Program Coordinator/Manager
- Healthcare Provider
- Other

### Geographic Distribution

- Central Ontario (Toronto, GTA)
- Western Ontario (Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, London)
- Ontario Wide
- Eastern Ontario (Ottawa, Kingston, Peterborough)
- Prefer not to answer

## What We Heard: Challenges and Barriers

**System Capacity Limitations and Service Gaps**

Long waitlists, limited programs, inadequate funding, and shortages leave critical needs unmet.

**Lack of System Knowledge and Navigation**

Confusing information, unclear eligibility, and complex systems make it harder to know where to go or how to access care.

**These challenges overlap and build on each other creating compounding barriers to care.**

**Lack of Culturally Responsive Care and Language Barriers**

Services that don't reflect cultural relatilites or offer language support lead to misunderstandings, discrimination and disconnection.

**Cultural Stigma and Fear of Disclosure**

Stigma around LGBTQ+ identities, HIV, and sex itself within newcomer communities created fear of judgement and exclusion.

## What We Heard: Solutions and Recommendations

- **Advance Culturally Responsive, Linguistically Accessible, and Affirming Care**
- **Invest in Sustainable Funding Models and Service Expansion**
- **Strengthen and Sustain Peer-Based Programming**
- **Strengthen System Coordination and Navigation Supports**

## What We're Doing Next

**Regional Sexual Health Resource Roadmaps**

Region-specific directories for Ontario to support easier care navigation.

**Peer Navigator Training Program**

Building a network of trained peers to help community members in navigating health and social services

**Delivering Community Workshops**

Interactive province-wide workshops to build knowledge and skills around service navigation.

**Interactive Pathways Tool**

An online. decision-making navigator to help connect people to the right resources faster.