



Transgender Recreation Experiences in the Lower Mainland



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BACKGROUND

Awareness of the need for recreation policies supporting the inclusion of the transgender community has become more prevalent in Canada. However, the transgender community continues to experience discrimination and stigma which impact trans' feelings of safety in recreation. The Lower Mainland has many programs supporting trans inclusion, as well as trans-specific programming.

Cisgender refers to individuals who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth

Transgender: in this study, refers to all individuals who are not cisgender

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Transgender recreation experiences are multilayered; impacted by gender identity, stage of transition, and body satisfaction (Jones et al., 2017).
- Gender segregated spaces (changerooms, sports teams, etc.) represent a significant barrier for transgender recreation inclusion. Trans-inclusive policy commonly seen in Vancouver often lacks explicitness (Nguyen, 2022).
- Transgender people with different identities have diverse recreation experiences
- Transgender people have complex internal narratives regarding their physical body, which impacts feelings of safety in recreation spaces (Oakleaf & Richmond, 2017).

RESEARCH METHODS

- 13 transgender individuals from the Lower Mainland: 6 nonbinary, 4 transmen, 1 transwoman, 2 genderqueer. Very active group; 9 engaged in recreation a few times a week
- Qualitative online survey via Survey Planet
- 36 items consisting of multiple choice, Likert scales, and open-ended questions
- Several questions adapted from similar studies
- Recruited through snowball and purposive sampling

Research Question

What factors can contribute to increased recreation engagement for transgender individuals in the Lower Mainland?

RESULTS

Internal and External Factors

- External:** 46% said **trans-inclusive policy** facilitated inclusion
 - 31% felt **universal changerooms** would increase recreation
 - 38% experienced **overt transphobia** in recreation spaces
- Internal:** 40% stated their **body satisfaction level** negatively impacted their participation; significant variance in levels
 - 31% somewhat comfortable, 38% somewhat uncomfortable, and 23% very **uncomfortable in gender segregated spaces**
 - 77% of respondents experienced **fear of discrimination** that had a medium-significant negative effect on recreation

Feelings of Safety In Recreation

Figure 1: Difficulty Feeling Safe within Recreation Over the Life Course

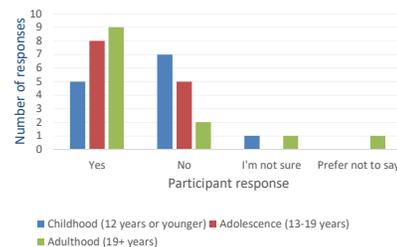
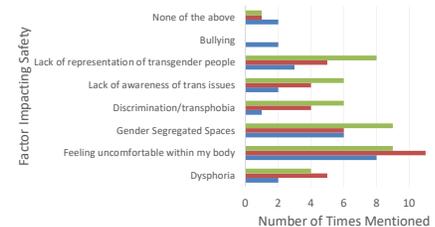
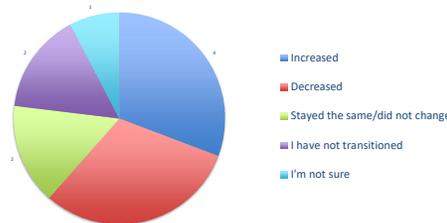


Figure 2: Factors Impacting Feelings of Safety in Recreation Over the Life Course



Impact of Transition on Recreation Levels

Figure 3. Changes in Recreation Engagement Due to Transition (medical and/or social)



DISCUSSION

- Factors such as body satisfaction and medical transition may act as a barrier or a facilitator to recreation engagement depending on the individual
- Feelings of safety within recreation spaces decrease throughout the life course; internal and external factors that contribute to this also change. May be influenced by an ongoing and lifelong conversation with gender
- Trans-specific programming, trans-Inclusive policy, and removal of gender segregation are possible sources of increased recreation engagement

RECOMMENDATIONS

Researchers:

- Include a larger sample size and greater diversity in gender identity and recreation levels
- Conduct qualitative, face to face interviews
- Investigate effective, trans-centered implementation of policies

Polymakers:

- A one-size fits all approach to transgender recreation inclusion may not be fully effective**
- Include transgender people in policy design

REFERENCES

Jones, B. A. et al. (2017a). Barriers and facilitators of physical activity and sport participation among young transgender adults who are medically transitioning. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 18(2), 227–238.

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