

# We're Here

2SLGBTQ+ Youth across Ontario Assess Needs and Experiences



A SUMMARY REPORT  
2020

*LGBT YouthLine acknowledges that the land we work on throughout Ontario is colonized land, and encompasses an array of Indigenous territories. YouthLine works in this community, in this context, on this territory.*

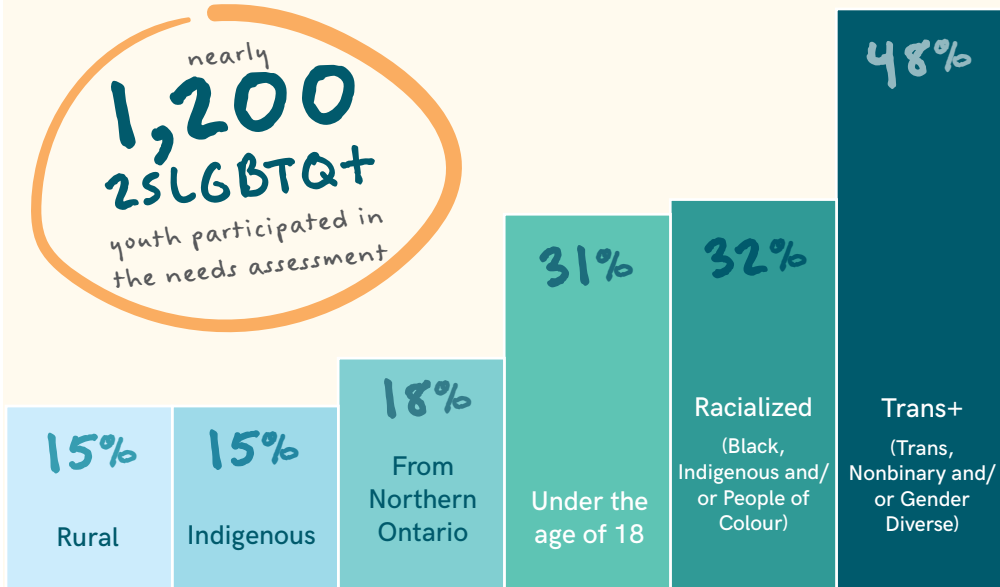
**LGBT YouthLine’s Provincial Youth Ambassador Project (PYAP) brought together 18 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Ambassadors from across Ontario to lead an assessment about the experiences and needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth (29 and under) in Ontario. Almost 1,200 youth participated through an online survey and community sharing circles between July-September, 2019.**

The research results are powerful and speak to the immediate and future needs of our communities, while also amplifying the resilience of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Ontario are demanding change and a call to action to all those in positions of power, including politicians and social service providers.

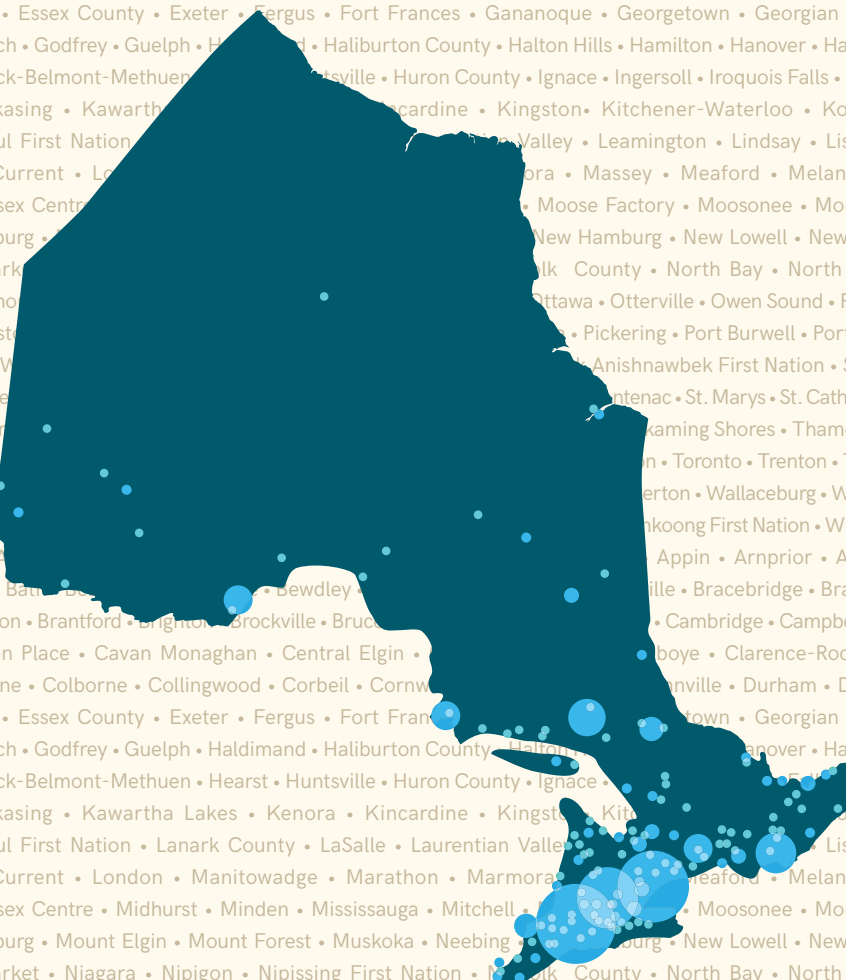
This Summary Report highlights research findings, and is inclusive of all populations and identities.

To ensure the prioritization of communities who are often invisible in mainstream/dominant narratives of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, five smaller Snapshots have also been created to highlight: Indigenous youth; racialized youth; trans, nonbinary and gender diverse youth; northern youth; and youth under 18.

Access long form and snapshot reports at [youthline.ca](https://youthline.ca)



# Participant communities



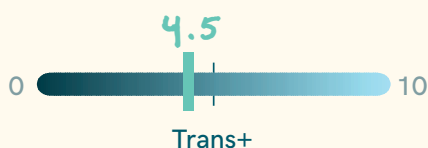
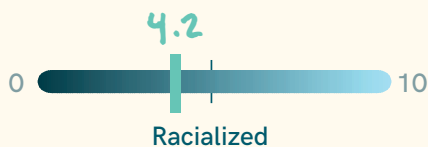
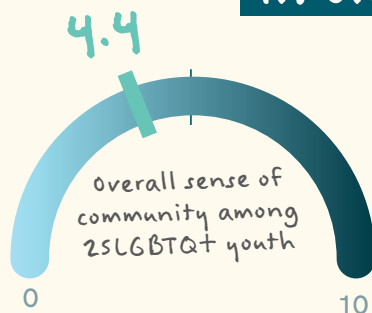
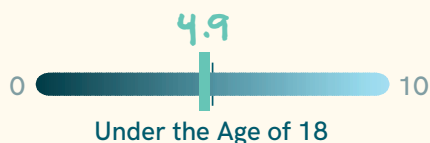
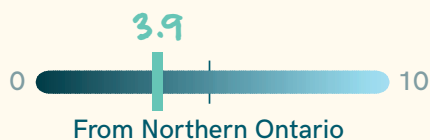
A map of Ontario, Canada, is shown in a dark teal color. Overlaid on the map are numerous blue dots of varying sizes, representing the locations of participant communities. The dots are scattered across the province, with a higher concentration in the southern and eastern regions. The names of the communities are listed in a light teal font, repeated across the page, serving as a background for the map.

Ajax • Alban • Alvinston • Alymer • Amherstburg • Amherstview • Ancaster • Appin • Arnprior • Aylmer  
Barrie • Bath • Belle River • Belleville • Bewdley • Blind River • Bolton • Bowmanville • Bracebridge • Bradford  
Brampton • Brantford • Brighton • Brockville • Bruce County • Burlington • Caledon • Cambridge • Campbellford  
Carleton Place • Cavan Monaghan • Central Elgin • Chatham-Kent • Clandeboye • Clarence-Rockland  
Cochrane • Colborne • Collingwood • Corbeil • Cornwall • Delhi • Drumbo • Dunnville • Durham • Dutton  
Elmira • Essex County • Exeter • Fergus • Fort Frances • Gananoque • Georgetown • Georgian Bluffs  
Goderich • Godfrey • Guelph • Haldimand • Haliburton County • Halton Hills • Hamilton • Hanover • Hastings  
Havelock-Belmont-Methuen • Hearst • Huntsville • Huron County • Ignace • Ingersoll • Iroquois Falls • Jarvis  
Kapusking • Kawartha Lakes • Kenora • Kincardine • Kingston • Kitchener-Waterloo • Komoka  
Lac Seul First Nation • Lanark County • LaSalle • Laurentian Valley • Leamington • Lindsay • Listowel  
Little Current • London • Manitowadge • Marathon • Marmora • Meaford • Melancthon  
Middlesex Centre • Midhurst • Minden • Mississauga • Mitchell • Moosonee • Moravian  
Morrisburg • Mount Elgin • Mount Forest • Muskoka • Neeningburg • New Hamburg • New Lowell • Newcastle  
Newmarket • Niagara • Nipigon • Nipissing First Nation • Norfolk County • North Bay • North Perth  
Northshore of Lake Huron • Novar • Oakville • Orangeville • Orillia • Ottawa • Otterville • Owen Sound • Paisley  
Palmerston • Parry Sound • Pembroke • Perth • Peterborough • Petrolia • Pickering • Port Burwell • Port Elgin  
Quinte West • Red Lake • Renfrew • Richmond Hill • Rockland • Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation • Sarnia  
Sault Ste Marie • Sharbot Lake • Simcoe • Sioux Lookout • Smiths Falls • South Frontenac • St. Marys • St. Catharines  
St. Thomas • Stoney Point • Stouffville • Stratford • Sudbury • Sydenham • Temiskaming Shores • Thamesville  
Thessalon • Thornhill • Thorold • Thunder Bay • Timmins • Tiny Township • Tiverton • Toronto • Trenton • Tweed  
Val Caron • Vankleek Hill • Vaughan • Wabaseemoong Independent Nations • Walkerton • Wallaceburg • Wasaga  
Beach • Waterford • Watford • Webequie First Nation • Welland • Whitby • Wiikwemkoong First Nation • Windsor

## What did 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Ontario

### Sense of community

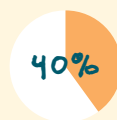
Overwhelmingly, 2SLGBTQ+ youth reported having a very low sense of community.



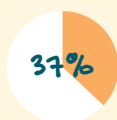
### Supporting mental health

When asked how they support their own mental health, 2SLGBTQ+ youth shared that they rely on **self-directed or self-driven resources**.

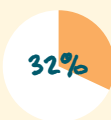
Across all communities, practicing self care and talking to friends/peers are the top two strategies.



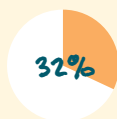
Trans+



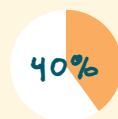
Racialized



Under 18



Northern



Indigenous



# GBTQ+ youth to tell us?

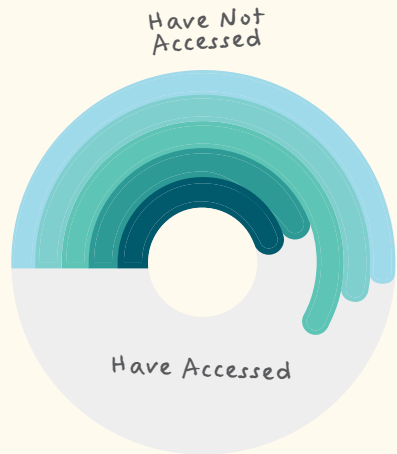
## Access to 2SLGBTQ+ youth spaces

Most 2SLGBTQ+ youth shared that they had not accessed a space dedicated to 2SLGBTQ+ youth in their geographic community.

This is especially true for Indigenous youth, youth in Northern Ontario, and youth under the age of 18.

“ Give us a space to gather together. A safe, comfortable space.”

55% of youth  
have not accessed a  
2SLGBTQ+ space



- Trans+
- Racialized
- Under 18
- Northern
- Indigenous

On average,  
**1/3**  
of 2SLGBTQ+ youth  
said their mental health  
needs **are not** being met

- Accessing cultural/religious support
- Call/text/chat support lines
- Support groups/community spaces
- Practicing alternative healing
- Using substances
- Mental health needs are not being met
- Connecting with members of community
- Accessing mainstream mental health supports
- Talking to friends/peers
- Practicing self care

## Top needs when accessing services, resources & spaces

“ Not everyone lives in the big city. Please help support rural communities in creating safe and inclusive spaces.

“ I won't go places unless it's through word of mouth from other queer folks.

#1	Low to no financial costs/expenses
#2	Close distance
#3	Confidentiality
#4	Youth-based space

## What changes do 2SLGBTQ+ youth want and need in their communities?

“ ...there are 8000 people in my town, and we need a queer space, not just a planning meeting for Pride and subsequent Pride events.

- **Spaces to gather**, and ongoing community events
- **Health services and resources**, including mental health supports, trans-specific health resources, and comprehensive services in smaller communities
- **Greater awareness** of our community and its needs
- **Challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia everywhere**

“ [We need] empowerment and healing for oppressed and marginalized communities, and healing for those with more privilege, too, so that we can all work together toward a better future.

“ [We need] more opportunities for inter-generational exchange and mentorship.

## What do 2SLGBTQ+ youth love about being 2SLGBTQ+?

### I love...

“

I love knowing I don't have to leave a part of myself behind.

Community helps me find language for things that I didn't know how to express.

I have never been more supported than I have by my queer/trans friends.

### However...

“

I love that I am free to love who I love, but that has come with many hardships over my lifetime.

I see people's bigotry everyday. It wears you down over time.

.. My parents aren't accepting and I am not accepting of myself... so I feel a disconnect to what I want, who I am, and what the world expects of me.

## What do 2SLGBTQ+ youth want to say to decision-makers?

“

Just ask a queer person before you make any decisions, ask us. Consult with us.

“

Do the work to better yourself, educate yourselves.

“

Politicians don't care about the future generations. If they did, they wouldn't continue down the path they are currently on.

“

We don't need your prayers, we need action.

“

We exist, ask what we want and don't make decisions without us.

“

Why do you say you're for the people, when you ignore large groups of them and their needs? Where is our representation?

“

The system for transitioning needs to be FIXED.

“

All gender bathrooms should be mandatory by now.

“Dare to imagine that we’re everywhere – we’re not an afterthought.”

— 2SLGBTQ+ youth

Thanks to all the 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Ontario who shared their thoughts and experiences with us! A big shout out to the Provincial Youth Ambassadors who worked tirelessly on this project, and ensured that the experiences of those most marginalized are amplified.

In addition to this Summary Report, there are five smaller Snapshot Reports that highlight the needs and experiences of:

- Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ youth
- Racialized 2SLGBTQ+ youth
- Trans, Nonbinary and Gender Diverse youth
- 2SLGBTQ+ youth under 18
- Northern 2SLGBTQ+ youth

Access snapshot reports, and long form report at [youthline.ca](https://youthline.ca)  
Questions? Contact [pyap@youthline.ca](mailto:pyap@youthline.ca)

LGBT YouthLine is a 2SLGBTQ+ youth-led organization that affirms and supports the experiences of youth (29 and under) across Ontario.



@lgbtyouthline

youthline.ca