

# CATALYZING COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH BY, WITH, AND FOR 2S/LBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE

Key Learnings and Research Priorities  
Identified at the Gathering



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## 2S/LBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE AND RESEARCH

Structural and systemic forces, including misogyny, sexism, and transmisogyny, create and drive social inequities that impact the social inclusion, participation, and overall wellbeing of Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (2S/LBTQIA+) women and gender-diverse communities across their life course. This includes research, where there is an under-representation of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people in community-engaged research, and limited scholarship focused on the social and health issues, cultures, and priorities of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people conducted by, with, and for these communities.

Further, we know that 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse students, emerging scholars, and community-based researchers experience isolation and face challenges in obtaining training or mentoring and funding to address the unique issues facing their communities. This only reinforces a cycle of these realities being understudied and under-addressed.

Valuing 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people's experiential knowledge is crucial, including to challenge dominant ideological narratives about gender, and to build critical knowledge. Creating more robust trainee-to-researcher pathways, including through networking and mentorship, can aid in further developing 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people of all backgrounds as critical researchers who can contribute to building more robust fields of knowledge, social policies, and public cultures.

## THE GATHERING

To address these important gaps, Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC) partnered with Dr. Celeste Pang in Fall 2025 to organize a gathering to provide opportunities to catalyze community-based research by, with, and for 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people.

This gathering brought together a multidisciplinary group of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse individuals for a day of learning and conversation. It included emerging and established scholars from across academic fields; students and trainees; and practitioners working in non-profit organizations that serve 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse communities.

The purpose of this event was to: (a) discuss issues of under-representation in community-engaged research and training; (b) identify emerging issues, priorities, and research questions for future community-based research to address 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse communities' concerns; and (c) facilitate networking including for student and trainee mentorship.

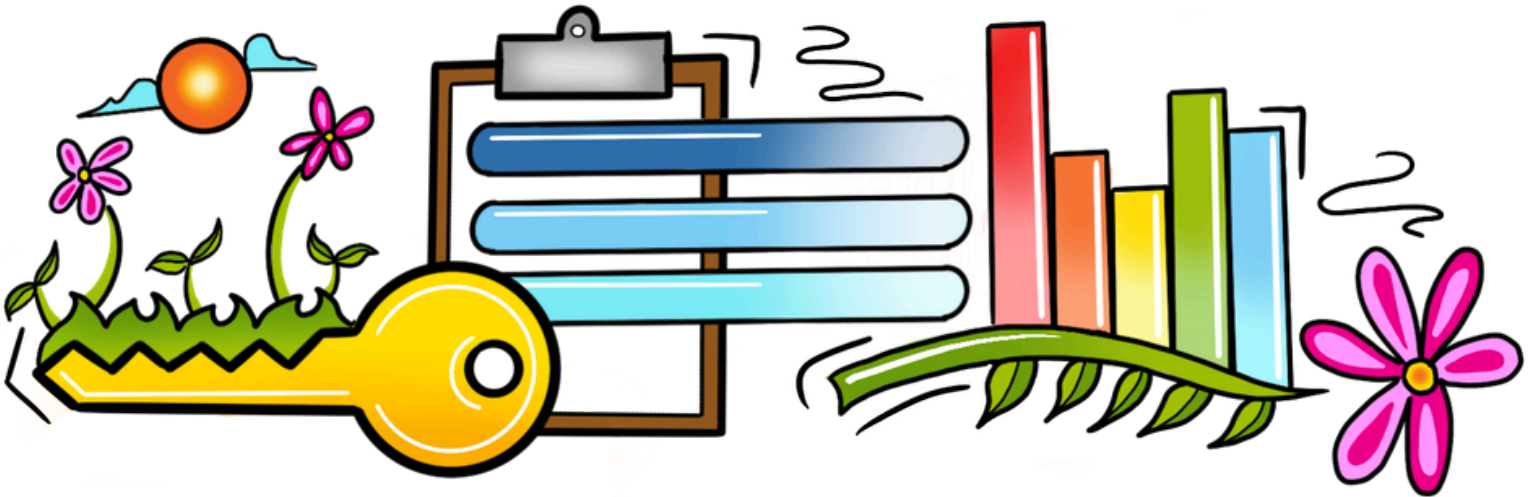
The gathering was held directly after CBRC's Summit 2025, which took place in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke on Sunday, November 23, with participation also possible via Zoom. Most of the 40 participants joined the event in person. Participants were provided with an agenda for the day, which included prompts for reflection and discussion, along with community guidelines. The day was organized into two main activities: a panel in the morning, and community-based research agenda-setting discussions in the afternoon.

During both events, Harmeet Rehal, a multidisciplinary artist, educator, and organizer based in Toronto/Tkaronto, conducted in-person graphic note-taking. This report includes the graphic recordings Harmeet produced, and further elaboration of the key learnings and research priorities emerging from the panel and agenda-setting discussions. Elder Sedalia Kawennotas Fazio attended the entire gathering, after having attended both the full CBRC Two-Spirit Symposium and Summit over the previous five days. She offered thoughtful and generous reflections to open and close the event, as well as during all discussions that took place.

The morning panel, titled "Taking Up Space" focused on 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse communities' needs and experiences in multi-disciplinary research. The panel included Dr. Tara Chanady, Dr. Percy Lezard, lonnes Ieloup, Yamikani Msosa, and Dr. Celeste Pang. The panellists were asked to speak about how their work (including both research and activist work) addresses key priorities or gaps for 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people and hopes for the future of community-engaged research, including within the specific communities they work with and/or are part of. The artwork below illustrates their backgrounds, key areas of work, and contributions to the panel.

In the afternoon, participants took part in facilitated discussions focused on identifying emerging issues, priorities, and research questions for future community-based research to address 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse communities' concerns. During these discussions, participants were asked to share their ideas and thoughts on the following two main topics: Community & Research Priorities and Enabling Good Relations & Productive Research. Note-taking took place at each table to capture conversation, as well as the graphic note-taking during sharebacks. Participants were also invited to write down their reflections on worksheets provided by organizers. After the event, our team summarized everything that was shared by participants for each prompt question, presented below.

# KEY LEARNINGS AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED AT THE GATHERING



## THE PANEL

Panellists first shared about **how their work addressed key priorities or gaps for 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people**. Their reflections included the need to:

- Address the lack of intersectionality in research and interventions (e.g., community services). Often the realities and needs of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people who are Indigenous, Black, and people of colour, migrants, poor, and/or sex workers are missing, and these communities do not feel included in either broader 2S/LGBTQIA+ work or in 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse spaces. This also leads to the needs of these communities being excluded from research on healthcare access. Further, frameworks that are grounded in settler-colonial understandings don't reflect Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer ways of knowing or lived experiences.
- Increase access to care, social wellbeing, housing, and cultural affirmation for community members as they age.
- Increase access to healthcare for sex workers including for trans women and women of colour sex workers.
- Address continued lesbophobia in medical spheres, as lesbophobia seriously limits access to care. Lesbophobia refers to the intersection of misogyny and homophobia faced by 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people.
- Conduct research that is meaningful and helpful to people experiencing poverty.

- Expand funding opportunities to address issues affecting 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people by broadening the frameworks through which this work is supported. For example, because of availability of funding for work addressing gender-based violence (GBV), organizations may pursue this funding and focus even if this framework may not be sufficiently nuanced or encompassing to reflect particular communities' most pressing needs.

Panellists also discussed their **hopes for the future of community-based research that centres 2S/LBTQ+ women and gender-diverse people**. Key pieces for this work to evolve included researchers coming into communities with accountability, humility, and reciprocity as well as a willingness to re-distribute power and co-create with, rather than merely consult, directly-impacted communities. For Indigenous people, this would look like resources and spaces that are grounded in localized Indigenous governance and leadership. Panellists also reflected on the absences in academic and community spaces, and the need for these spaces to be more truly inclusive of, accountable to, and uplifting of Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty, sex workers, and those from other equity-deserving communities.

## FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS

**Gathering participants included 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people who were part of, and/or worked with and for, a wide diversity of communities.** The group reflected the diversity within 2S/LBTQIA+ communities themselves, with participants whose experiences spanned multiple geographic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts. This included queer, trans, and non-binary people across generations; Indigenous, racialized, and immigrant community members; people living in both urban and rural communities; and individuals with diverse abilities. Participants' domains of work as community-based organizers and researchers also included many areas, such as health, HIV, harm reduction, housing and economic marginalization, youth, families, education, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, poverty, arts, and culture.

All participants shared their thoughts and reflections in response to prompts related to community and research priorities, as well as to fostering good relations and productive research.

## Discussion Questions





What communities do you work with and for?



What priorities or gaps do you see for community-engaged, multi-disciplinary research among 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people?

What is needed to enable good relations and productive research that centres 2S/LBTQ+ women and gender-diverse communities?

What would help advance this kind of research?



In terms of **priorities or gaps for community-engaged, multi-disciplinary research among 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people**, participants highlighted many issues. Here we have grouped these considerations into key themes, while also recognizing participants' critiques of "issue silos" and the need to build intersectional coalitions across communities and address the entanglement of different issues to effect change.

## Priorities for Research Processes

- **Increase Visibility:** There is a lack of visibility and representation of marginalized communities within research processes, and a need for researchers and others to be engaged in ongoing dialogue with impacted communities and to share research findings and knowledge with them as well as with those in positions of power.
- **Increase Participatory, Community-Led Research:** Research must use inclusive sex and gender frameworks, be participatory and community-led, include non-Western frameworks and concepts, and reflect community timelines and priorities. Knowledge must return to and benefit the community.
- **Reduce Institutional Barriers:** Institutions (such as universities and other research institutions) must reduce barriers and follow community-defined protocols. Mentorship, honest conversations, and attention to intersectionality and safety are critical. Institutional ethics do not equate to community accountability.
- **Better Engagement with Youth:** There is a need to better include younger youth in research (e.g., pre-teens), and to address structural barriers which limit youth participation in research (e.g., biases that may be held by research ethics boards).
- **Increase Funding:** More flexible, long-term funding is needed for grassroots, community-led research on issues faced by 2S/LBTQIA+ communities, including capacity-building and non-government funding sources. Health-related funding calls must also be more expansive, moving beyond a focus on HIV/STBBIs to addressing broader community concerns.



# Priorities for Health Research, Promotion, and Policy

- **Improve Systems Navigation and Access:** There is a need to better support the healthcare needs of LBTQIA+ refugees and newcomers during transitional periods, including support navigating healthcare systems. Further, critical gaps remain in access to sexual and reproductive healthcare for 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people, particularly as it relates to reproductive autonomy, as well as, for trans communities, access to everything from PrEP to HRT and gender-affirming care.
- **Create Paradigm Shifts:** There is a need for a paradigm shift in healthcare delivery informed by Indigenous approaches to health and wellness as well as the perspectives of youth, older folks, newcomers, Black women and gender-diverse communities, and ongoing attention to interplay of disability with 2S/LBTQ+ identities in healthcare access. Health research studies must move beyond a focus on cisgender men and be informed by critical feminist frameworks including trans frameworks and Indigenous feminisms.
- **Address Ageism:** There is age discrimination when it comes to community programming and funding for community programming. There is funding available for “youth” aged 13-29, but less support for people over age 30. This gap impacts and excludes, for example, newcomers and migrants who may be arriving to Canada as adults and “starting over” with fewer privileges and less access to services than younger people. Finally, there is a need to improve healthcare access and wellbeing for older community members as they age.
- **Increase Health Economics Research:** More health economics research conducted by, with, and/or for 2S/LBTQIA+ communities could help to establish a strategic evidence base to strengthen the case that investing in communities’ health (alongside housing and other supports) is ultimately cost-saving.

**To enable good relations and productive research,** participants shared a variety of ideas and paths forward based on their experiences and visions for the future of community-engaged research involving 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people. These ideas centered around dynamics of power, trust, and community-building, and included the following:

- **Shifting Power, Building on Knowledge:** Power must shift to grassroots groups, centering BIPOC communities, trans women, and trans femmes. Research and programming should build on existing community knowledge, with directly-affected communities leading, authoring, and owning the work. Providing capacity-building, training, and leadership development for people with lived experience will go far.
- **Trust Building:** Trust comes from a proven track record of safety, reciprocity, and follow-through over time. Extractive, rushed, or one-sided institutional practices only undermine relationships. Continuously having to justify community needs for research is harmful, especially laterally inside 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities.
- **Knowledge Sharing Spaces:** There is a need for more research and knowledge-sharing spaces that centre a diversity of equity-deserving communities such as Black women and Two-Spirit people.

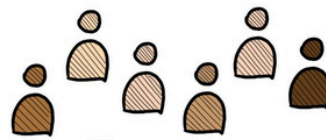
# CONCLUSION

This report highlighted key learnings and recommendations from a day of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse gathering and discussion. These discussions took place in a context where CBRC's mandate expansion to serve all 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities beyond gay men in 2021 is still relatively recent, and important reflections and evolutions on ways to affirm the experiences of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse communities are still taking place. Further, discussions at the gathering were deepened by important Indigenous teachings, especially regarding strengthening our connection to the land (our ultimate source of health) and to local Indigenous communities. CBRC recognizes the need to develop relationships with local Indigenous communities in regions where we may not have had a strong presence before, such as Montréal/Tiohtià:ke. Relationship building depends on respect, transparent discussion, and meaningful action, which CBRC remains committed to as it continues to serve people of diverse sexualities and genders. As highlighted in this report, important work is needed by those who have power, to raise up those who may have less, and CBRC staff and collaborators are leading crucial work in order for this to be possible.

Discussions at the gathering shone light on the concrete ways that structural and systemic forces – including misogyny, sexism, transmisogyny, and cisheteronormativity – create and drive social inequities that impact the social inclusion, participation, and overall wellbeing of 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse communities daily and across their life course. Racism, colonialism, and the ways in which they intertwine were also highly evident both in the issues raised during gathering discussions and in the personal experiences participants shared. Learning and transformation must continue to take place, and institutions, leaders, and community members must continue to recognize and address the systemic barriers that 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people – especially those from multiply-marginalized equity-deserving groups – face in pursuing and thriving within research environments, and work to uplift them. Community-based research must elevate these communities to drive social change and address health disparities, and this report includes some important reflections for doing so in meaningful ways.

Valuing 2S/LBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people's experiential knowledge is crucial to build critical and impactful knowledge and initiatives. We hope this report will plant important seeds for community-based researchers to grow, listen, and engage. The learnings from this event clearly demonstrate the need to continue to collectively discuss and address issues faced by 2S/LBTQIA+ communities. We conclude with a feeling of endless recognition and gratitude for the immense generosity that was provided by panellists and all participants who spent the day together.

# TAKING UP SPACE



SETTING A COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH AGENDA BY, WITH AND FOR 2S/LGBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE (PANEL)!

ELDER

SEDALIA KAWENWOTAS FAZIO

CELESTE PANG

TARA CHAMADY

LONNES LÉLOUP

DR. PERCY LEZARD

YAMIKANI MSOSA



<p>Roots in Kahnawake and Active Elder w/in Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Community.</p>	<p>Focus on aging disability, equity and care access, especially for 2S/LGBTQIA+ Communities.</p>	<p>Focus on Lesbo-queer Community and their needs in Quebec.</p>	<p>Rooted in DTES Vancouver, and its poor SW and trans-femme Communities.</p>	<p>Focus on First-Nations, Métis, Inuit, Black, Indigenous, Afro-Indigenous, 2S, Trans, SW, youth, Deaf/HoH + houseless COMMUNIT.</p>	<p>Focus on healing justice, Abolition, anti-racism, anti-oppression and 2S/QT+ Black folks.</p>
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HOW DOES YOUR WORK ADDRESS KEY PRIORITIES OR GAPS FOR 2S/LGBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE?

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH THAT CENTRES 2S/LGBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE?

Lack of intersectionality in LGBTQ+ spaces  
Lesbo-phobia in Medical Sphere, and lives of BIPOC and migrants

TARA CHAMADY



In Ottawa, African LGBTQ+ newcomers are not only not included, they are not considered in the design of Services  
Housing, cultural food, and Spaces are vital

YAMIKANI MSOSA



"I'M HERE BE YOU ARE"  
ACCOUNTABILITY IS A GAP!

Most policy and GBV frameworks grounded in Settler understanding that don't reflect 2S lived experience  
We need resources for and by Indigenous people grounded in localized Indigenous governance, w/out this harm continues  
Settler role is not to replicate, but to make space for resources and follow our leadership, that's how the gap is filled!



COME WITH

- 1 Accountability
- 2 Humility
- 3 Reciprocity
- 4 Redistribution of power
- 5 Co-creation

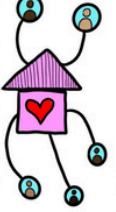
Funders focused on GBV, poor women/SWs experience w/ poverty not understood in nuanced ways  
Lack of P-EP for SWs

LONNES LÉLOUP



How can our communities access not only care, but a social life and their full humanity as they age  
We need to combat racist ideas that racialized care workers are homophobic!

CELESTE PANG



Re: CBRC conference space - these spaces feel tokenistic bc Indigenous folks Indigenous to these lands not here!

Elder Sedalia generously calls out the lack of 2S representation in the room! The future of these spaces needs to look different

Conference space is rooted in settler logics, with little to no relationship building w/ Indigenous community in Tiohtia:ke!

Accountability, disruption, and Intervention is needed for this harm.



DR. LEZARD



Illustration by Harmet Rehal HRehal

**Pictured:** Graphic Recording by Harmet Rehal depicting panellists' research and backgrounds, and key points in response to panel prompt questions accompanied by symbolic imagery relating to that of healthcare, culture, newcomers and migrants, funding, and Indigenous community.

# SETTING A COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH AGENDA BY, WITH AND FOR 2S/LGBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE

WHAT PRIORITIES OR GAPS DO YOU SEE FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH, MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AROUND 2S/LGBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE?

- Lack of distinction in research, a coming together is vital
- Youth need to be included in research spaces, but age often an issue in funding structures
- Newcomer/migrants often starting over as adults, more research needed around this
- Responding to poverty in our communities + Ageism!

Upstream and downstream is needed in research and knowledge sharing

**Focus on**  
 Policy shifts  
 Lack of access to HRT + gender affirming care  
 Isolation + delayed care

HOW DOES RESEARCH TALK TO COMMUNITY? HOW DOES COMMUNITY TALK TO RESEARCH? HOW CAN IT BE A GENUINE DIALOGUE?

- Black women and gender-diverse communities needed in research spaces, symposiums and panels
- Health economics research for strategic cost related arguments → MONEY TALKS!
- Prioritizing sexual health for ALL queer and trans people, not just cis men
- Being accountable to history of transphobia in lesbian spaces

Research can bring up trauma - important that interventions have support and are based on true relationships, anchored in community

Sharing related to Elder Seelaba's words!

WHAT IS NEEDED TO ENABLE GOOD RELATIONS AND PRODUCTIVE RESEARCH THAT CENTRES 2S/LGBTQIA+ WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE COMMUNITIES?

- Awareness of feminist frame works and trans + Indigenous feminisms
- Who is not in the room, who needs to be here, how do we reach them?
- Involving communities in governance + leadership; providing training to those w/ lived experience
- Not replicating work communities are doing, supporting and resourcing instead
- Creating other ecosystems of capital if gov. does not provide us w/ funding!
- Ethics vs. accountability going beyond ethics boards

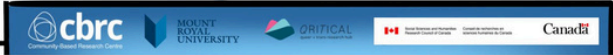


Illustration by Harmeet Rehal

**Pictured:** Graphic Recording by Harmeet Rehal depicting participants' responses to prompt questions including imagery symbolizing community, distinction/community in research, newcomers and migrants, leadership, feminist frameworks, supporting and resourcing, funding, support systems, and accountability balance.

# Graphic Note-taking and Report Design

Harmeet Rehal

## Gathering Contributors

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