



2023

THE CANADIAN NON-BINARY YOUTH IN SPORT REPORT

Prepared by :

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BACKGROUND

The experiences of non-binary youth in organized team sports in Canada have been drastically understudied. Martha Gumprich's (they/them) master's thesis examined these experiences using data collected through the UnACoRN (Understanding Affirming Community, Relationships and Networks) Study, an online survey for youth ages 15-29 across Canada.

Martha's thesis explored the needs and experiences of non-binary youth in sport, including non-binary youth participation in and avoidance of sport, and experiences of abuse or discrimination. Their data sample is comprised of 1929 cisgender and 2513 non-binary youth. Non-binary includes those who identify as non-binary, genderqueer, third gender, genderfluid, agender, or selected "yes" to trans experience and do not identify with a binary gender.

METHODS

Martha partnered with Nicola Hare (she/her) from Trans Connect, a health and community program supporting transgender, Two-Spirit, intersex, and gender diverse people in the East and West Kootenay regions of British Columbia, Canada.

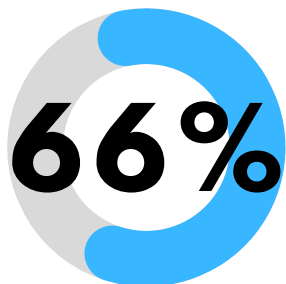
The goal of this partnership was to engage with gender minority youth who want to help make sport a safer environment for all genders. Together they held youth group sessions with queer, non-binary and transgender youth ages 14-26 in Nelson, Castlegar and online to discuss Martha's main thesis findings and hear solutions posed by the youth. In total, they engaged with 20 participants ages 14-26.

Key term: Non-binary means someone's gender does not fall, exclusively, into the categories of man or woman.

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RESULTS AND SOLUTIONS

Non-binary youth avoid joining organized team sports for many reasons

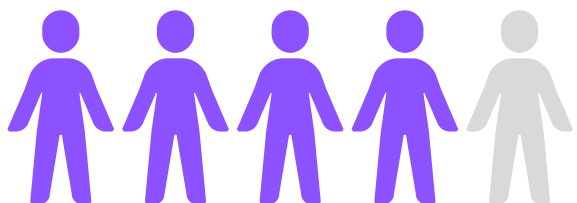


of non-binary youth in Canada who have avoided joining an organized team sport have done so because they would have to play on a binary gendered (men's or women's) team.

Solutions:

- Allow non-binary participants to choose the gendered team they want to play on
- Have mixed gendered (co-ed) teams
- In PE classes, divide teams by competitiveness

4 in 5



non-binary youth in Canada who have avoided joining an organized team sport, have done so because of changeroom/locker room layouts.

Solutions:

- Create a gender-neutral changing area with single stalls
- When impossible, facilities can post the following:
 - "People entering this facility deserve safety and respect. While this space may be labelled for a specific gender, harassment of any kind will not be tolerated."

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RESULTS AND SOLUTIONS

1 in 2

non-binary youth in Canada who have avoided joining an organized team sport have done so because of teammates and coaches.

More than 1 in 2



non-binary youth in Canada in sport have witnessed discriminatory comments.



More than 1 in 6

non-binary youth in Canada in sport have witnessed someone being physically harassed because of their gender.

Solutions:

- Better education on diverse genders and sexualities
- Use people's pronouns and preferred names
- Consequences for breaking rules regarding inclusion
- Stand up for those being harassed

Low rates of non-binary youth are participating in organized team sports

Only 11%

of non-binary youth in Canada currently participate in an organized team sport.

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WHY DO WE NEED TO MAKE SPORT MORE INCLUSIVE?

Everyone stands to benefit when sport is made more inclusive for non-binary participants. By creating single stall changing spaces, more people, regardless of gender, will feel comfortable changing in a public space. By allowing participants to wear the gendered uniform of their choice, or making uniforms unisex, more people may feel comfortable wearing their team's uniform.

Increasing education on diverse sexualities and genders improves people's understanding of others and themselves. With better understanding comes a reduction in fear and an increase in acceptance.

Through the enactment of the outlined solutions, more youth may join or remain in sport. Participation in physical activities, particularly activities with the sociality of team sports, is a key part in preventative health measures. Participant's mental and physical health stands to improve, thus reducing the burden on our health care system.

While it may seem daunting to begin making changes on your team, in your school, or at your recreation centre, action is needed and the benefits are vast. Do not be afraid to ask questions and reach out to experts for consultation.

Now is the time to enact pro-active, inclusive policies to protect and include gender minorities in sport

HAVE QUESTIONS?



Contact:

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REAFFIRM Collaborative - <https://tinyurl.com/reaffirmcollab>

We are grateful to the thousands of young people who shared their experiences through the UnACoRN survey as well as the youth who attended our focus group sessions and gave their feedback on solutions for issues in sport. Martha would like thank SSHRC for funding their thesis research. We would also like to thank SFU's Office of Community Engagement for funding this project.



TRANS
CCONNECT



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