

below, giving examples of extreme persecution that LGBTQ2 people have experienced. In Iran, homosexuality is punishable by death. Some Iranian leaders have described homosexuality as "an illness that should be cured". In Russia, gay teenagers are tortured and forcibly outed on the internet against a backdrop of laws that are completely out of step with the rest of Europe. President Putin has passed anti-gay laws, including legislation that punishes people and groups that distribute information considered "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations".

In Brazil, nearly 1,600 people have died in hate-motivated attacks in the past four and half years, according to Bay's Gay Group, which tracks the deaths through news articles. Its tally reveals that a gay or transgender person is killed almost every day in this nation of 200 million. Brazilian police often omit anti-gay animus when compiling homicide reports. In India, homophobia is prevalent. Public discussion of homosexuality in India has been inhibited by the fact that sexuality in any form is rarely discussed openly. In recent years, however, attitudes towards homosexuality have shifted slightly. In particular, there have been more depictions and discussions of homosexuality in the Indian news media and in Bollywood.



Despite discouraging realities, more and more people are openly expressing their sexual orientation and demanding their rights. Because of the work of many groups and their allies, acceptance of LGBTQ2 rights around the world is growing, and more governments are beginning to legislate in favour of LGBTQ2 rights and anti-discrimination laws. In the coming years, the major issues for LGBTQ2 rights on a global scale will be: eradicating persecution based on sexual orientation; protection in the law from hate crimes and hate propaganda; equal rights and privileges (marriage, common law partnerships, medical-decision making, wills and estates, parenting and adoption); and working to educate people about homophobia and heterosexism

Transforming Lives in Peel: The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ2) Program at Family Services of Peel (FSP)

Family Services of Peel has been a pioneer and leader in developing services and programs for the LGBTQ community in Peel. The organization established the LGBTQ2S program over 11 years ago with the intention of catering services to meet the specific needs of this section of the population in Peel. It currently offers individual counselling and weekly support groups to people of all ages in the LGBTQ2 community, including parents and families who are looking for support. While the program was created as a response to a community need, it was established on the principles of human rights, equity and justice. The initial outreach was conducted through presentations, workshops and word of mouth. LGBTQ2 clients currently accessing services are provided with a safe and respectful place where they can be supported. The weekly groups offer a forum where clients can discuss topics and current events that are relevant to them. The Clients that require services from Family Services of Peel, regardless of the specific program, are dealing with various emotional/psychological issue and are at a vulnerable time in their lives.



Employees of Family Services of Peel maintain a heightened awareness of the sensitive nature of issues clients deal with harassment, discrimination, stigmatization and threats of violence. As Professionals' employees are non-judgemental in their approach, they respect the intrinsic worth of each person, the relationship with client is a mutual endeavour between active participants the client and the counsellor. The foundation of this relationship is the belief that clients have the right and capacity to determine and achieve their goals and objectives.

The following are some of the issues that LGBTQ2 clients are faced with: (1) coming out and disclosure - It is a life changing growth that has the potential to affect their physical and mental wellbeing, setting a precedent for the rest of their lives. (2) Risk of mental health disparities, one of the most prominent mental health problems being depression and suicidal ideation (3) Increased risk of developing heavy substance abuse problems due to being subjected to harassment. (4) Harassment and violence are considered along with discrimination, direct and overt oppression toward LGBTQ2. They suffer verbal abuse from peers and family members. While they appear to be independent, all problems faced by LGBTQ2 are interdependent, interconnected, and mutually conditional on each other. To finalize, the importance of our need to self-examination of our beliefs, values and attitudes toward LGBTQ2 clients. This will ensure that we can understand the clients' needs and are able to provide them with supports that are more meaningful and effective.



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