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LGBTQ IMMIGRANT EXCLUSION:

AN INTRODUCTION

by

Johanna Laing, BA, Trent University, 2006

A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

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LGBTQ IMMIGRANT EXCLUSION:

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Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

Based upon personal experience, existing literature, original data from Toronto 211 and key informants, this research paper identifies the need for the development and implementation of settlement services that meet the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) immigrants and newcomers. These sources of evidence suggest that these especially marginalized immigrants and newcomers receive a cool and minimal welcome and their service options are limited to a very select few agencies that may only meet some, not all, of their needs, and may exacerbate identity conflicts. This paper argues the importance of providing a wider range of settlement agency options to LGBTQ migrants through the integration of LGBTQ services into both mainstream and culturally specific settlement agencies. With a critical eye to transferability to a multicultural and multi-faith sector, recommendations for ways in which settlement agencies can build or improve their accessibility and services for LGBTQ clients are inspired by research into 'culturally competent and 'safe space' practices discussed in existing academic and practical literature.

Key words: Immigrant; newcomer; LGBTQ; exclusion; homophobia; heterosexism; racism.

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Introduction

As a summer settlement worker in a second-tier city a few years ago during my undergraduate degree, an intake interview I conducted sparked my interest in the heterosexism of settlement services. Being heterosexual myself, I had never had much cause to reflect upon the pervasiveness of heteronormativity as a barrier to services and thus to recognise my privileged status. As a straight ally, I had much to learn about the range of discriminations experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ)[1] persons and how to best combat their oppression.

During an intake interview one day, the interviewee disclosed to me that he was gay, and asked where he could go to hang out and meet other gay people. Our city not being very large, my having lived there for twenty years, and my personal knowledge of LGBTQ-friendly places because of my having a queer family member and friends, I was able to provide him with some names of places. I was not, however, trained about the added discrimination LGBTQ newcomers face - such as homophobic rejection by their local ethnic community as well as the rest of the population whether straight or LGBTQ for other reasons, or aware of what special needs LGBTQ newcomers might have - and so was not able to provide any other relevant service to him that would have facilitated his integration into our city as a gay man. Realising that not every one of my colleagues might have even possessed the cursory knowledge about the queer community in our city that I did, I became very much aware of the heterosexism underlying the way our settlement agency went about interacting with its clients. This heterosexism was visible in the staff training as well as the expectations of the needs of

[1] LGBTQ is just one of many acronyms used to describe diversity of sexuality and gender. The inclusion of 'trans' in this term and in this paper is not intended to conflate sexuality with gender oppression, a concern that Fassinger and Arsenau (2007) raise, but rather to be recognise that both sexuality and gender identities have impacts on the settlement experiences of immigrants and newcomers. Efforts will be made to recognise the specific challenges caused by each kind of identity variation.

the clients we served. My training for intake interviews was rather basic and casual; I learned I should discover the needs of the newcomers in terms of health, housing, schooling (children and adults), and employment, etc. but not to provide specialized support for people suffering from any kind of specific discrimination. Intake was treated as a very routine thing; if my colleagues had more specialized skills and knowledge that they had learned on the job, they did not impart this to me. Issues that compound discrimination because of sexual orientation that are sometimes experienced by LGBTQ newcomers like AIDS and racism were also left un-discussed. Not all LGBTQ newcomers are HIV positive or suffering from AIDS, nor are they all suffering from racialisation; these issues do, however, influence settlement needs, and so need to be addressed in tandem. I recognised that I was not at all empowered by policies, procedures and training to provide effective settlement service to especially marginalised groups.

The assumption that immigrants seeking our services were either heterosexual or that LGBTQ immigrants couldn't possibly have needs that were not met in the same way as those of other immigrants was blatant in the lack of reference to LGBTQ issues (potentially compounded by race, etc.) not only in staff training but in any literature or reports published by our agency. The office space itself, lacking any kind of welcoming poster or relevant symbolism, was not obviously LGBTQ-friendly either. In no way was diversity of sexual and gender identity recognised, and as such, no inquisition into to the way the privileging of heterosexuality was affecting the services and thus the clients.

Often, the recognition of the privilege associated with certain identity variants generally goes unnoticed by those who possess the privilege. Yee and Dumbrill (2003) argue that the invisibility of privilege is instrumental in breeding oppression. By not recognising biases and diversity and not naming privilege, we were in fact unwittingly discriminating against clients

and fostering an atmosphere in which LGBTQ persons might continue to blame themselves for their troubles instead of the society that does not include them. This assumed heteronormativity, and accompanying heterosexism and homophobia, are not unique to the agency in which I worked, but rather are problems that plague Canadian society in general.

LGBTQ immigrants are not likely to suffer only because of their sexual or gender identity, however, but also because of their race. The LGBTQ 'community' is fractured along racial lines in ways not always visible to outsiders, and can result in racial discrimination that can also negatively impact the settlement of LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers. Rooted in power relations, racism exists not only between so-call majority and minority groups, but between minority groups as well, creating multiple levels of marginalization based upon hierarchies rooted in colonial traditions (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001; see also McDonald & Coleman, 1999). Documented forms of racism and exoticization of LGBTQ individuals include indirect forms of racism like the idolization of blond-haired and blue-eyed muscular White men that implies that others are less desirable, and situations imbued with power such as the habit of some elderly White gay men who seek exclusively young Asian male partners (Gay Asians Toronto, 1996). The recent nature of the above claims and the continued neglect of the recognition of race in current local and Western LGBTQ academic literature in general (discussed below) indicate that racism is still a problem in the LGBTQ 'community.' Furthermore, LGBTQ immigrants might face pressures from both cultural and sexuality peer groups to identify as part of their group, not recognising or allowing for complex identities in which no part is particularly salient (Walcott, 2006). This pressure requires individuals to hide a part of their identity in order to be welcomed into a group unconditionally, which is in no way relief from overall oppression. It is divisions like these that destroy the illusion held by outsiders that there is an existing LGBTQ community. Given the persecution that some

LGBTQ immigrants face in LGBTQ circles because of their race, as well as potential homophobia from culturally and/or religiously specific communities, it is even more important that mainstream settlement agencies get on board and reach out to doubly marginalized LGBTQ immigrants.

Objective

The potential existence and nature of the exclusion of LGBTQ immigrants is little discussed or studied, and remains a taboo and private issue that makes many people uncomfortable. Sometimes the issue is considered irrelevant because LGBTQ identities are falsely believed to be a strictly North American phenomenon. The neglect of LGBTQ issues in the settlement sector – and at best, the lip service LGBTQ rights are paid - makes it difficult to assess the existence and degree of exclusion. Settlement agencies in Toronto that do welcome LGBTQ clients, however, have identified a dearth of appropriate service for LGBTQ newcomers, which is indicative of exclusion. The objective of this paper is thus to raise awareness and be a call to action by introducing the issue of the neglect of LGBTQ immigrant and newcomer issues by the settlement sector as a problem that needs to be recognised and addressed by funders and the sector itself if the sector. Arguing that sexual and gender identity are factors that contributes to the shaping of the settlement experience and that needs to be taken into consideration by the settlement sector in terms of policies as well as program and service development and delivery, this paper explores the nature and consequences of the exclusion of LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers as well as explores ways by which the current situation can be improved.

Methodology

Since literature about homophobia and heterosexism in the settlement sector does not exist, the first section of this paper comprises an analysis literature about exclusion and about homophobia and heterosexism in other social service sectors to develop a hypothesis about the existence, the degree, and the potential nature of discrimination towards LGBTQ newcomers and immigrants in the settlement sector. Findings from this critical analysis of the literature will be weighed for validity in light of information that the settlement sector of Toronto provides about itself, its priorities and services so as to test the hypothesis about LGBTQ immigrant and newcomer oppression from the sector designed to support them. The argument about the importance of eradicating discrimination in the settlement sector towards LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers is further supported by an analysis of literature about racism that persists among LGBTQ 'communities,' which only hinders the settlement and integration process of racialised LGBTQ newcomers and immigrants.

The second section of this paper analyses existing literature about building the capacity of the settlement sector. Culturally-competent practice is used as a model to demonstrate the way in which settlement workers can develop an awareness of homophobia and heterosexist in themselves and their workplaces. The implementation and transferability to the settlement sector of LGBTQ-inclusive practices from social service sectors like mental health and counselling, social work, and education is also explored.

This paper is based primarily upon publicly available literature, and is enriched and validated by information gleaned from key informants who are currently working in LGBTQ advocacy in the settlement sector. Both key informants welcomed non-LGBTQ settlement-related interest and concern about LGBTQ immigrant and newcomer issues, and were very willing to share their knowledge and experiences.

Part 1: The exclusion of LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers

Inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion, whether on favourable or unfavourable grounds as well as exclusion and oppression find their roots in social structures, the nature of the governance of structures being a very instrumental factor in including and excluding certain groups and individuals. According to Bourdieu's theorization of societal reproduction (as discussed in Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Driessen, 2001), social structures responsible for organising society generally benefit those who fall into the categories of the norm. It is easier to activate social capital to one's advantage when one has much; when one has little, the ability to activate what little social capital that one possesses and thus to reap benefits in social situations is exponentially more difficult. This reinforces disadvantage (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Sen (2000) uses the term "capability deprivation" to describe the phenomenon of (at best) unfavourable inclusion or exclusion in which individuals and groups being stripped of the ability to ameliorate their position of exclusion by the exclusion itself. One of the ways in which this occurs is the fact that coping and getting-ahead strategies based on past oppression and disadvantaged experiences, as discussed by Room and Britton (2006), are not relevant to the rules and expectations of society. Society tends to have a very narrow view of what is acceptable behaviour and needs. Also, it is important to note that the degree to which one falls outside the norm mediates the success with which individuals and groups in social situations (Lareau & Horvat, 1999); this speaks of the intersectionality of oppression.

Exclusion is multifaceted, and the nature of exclusion needs to be understood before situationally relevant solutions to exclusion can be designed and implemented. Besides the obvious form of active exclusion, which leads to oppression, exclusion can also be passive. For instance, privilege is not always recognised by those who possess it; this can lead to

unintentional oppression. Simmons (1998) argues that Canada's non-racist policies are in fact oppressive because they are not actively anti-racist; while not putting up new obstacles, longstanding barriers to full social, economic and political participation are not recognised and dismantled. Furthermore, exclusion and oppression is sometimes constitutive/direct, and other times instrumental/indirect (see Sen, 2000 and Nevile, 2007 for discussion about the nature of exclusion and how oppression is perpetuated). Exclusion cannot be fully eradicated until all policies - old and new - are firstly analysed for indirect as well as direct causes of exclusion, whether passive or active, and then neutralised.

Taking responsibility for exclusion is never easy, and this is reflected in the strategies that neo-liberals tend to employ to reduce inclusion; these strategies, according to Ruggiero (2006), allow the role of economic and social forces in the process of exclusion to keep a low profile and tend to perpetuate the notion that excluded groups have deficiencies. The strategies alluded to include attempts to reduce exclusion through sharing power with marginalized groups through consultative processes.[2] The problem with this approach is that governments - who have the greatest ability to engender change - are putting minimal resources into the hands of the weak that will have less impact when fighting oppression than would the government with an equal amount of dollars. Furthermore, by offering enabling power and resources to minority groups and networks to better self-organise, the focus of responsibility for inclusiveness is shifted towards the oppressed, creating a situation in which there is "a focus on state driven institutional reforms or redistribution policies, [wherein] the "excluded" become

[2] Representing, as Newman (2002) describes, a solution to failed attempts of governance through traditional means such as micromanagement and centralization through state hierarchies and markets, neo-liberal governance methods characterised by consultation, networks and the sharing of responsibility for service provision with the public and private sectors are rooted in the notion that, according to Ruggiero, "the state can no longer assume a monopoly either of expertise or of the resources necessary to govern" (2006: 2; see also Kooiman 1993 & 1999). Ruggiero suggests that there is an undertheorisation of the social implications of this shift of governance styles, and suggests "new social movement" theory (2006: 7) as an effective tool through which to explore the inclusion and exclusion maintained and instigated by this phenomenon.

now the target of “influencing” policies” (Ruggiero, 2006: 10). This is often done through a showering of rather minimal financial resources on a handful of minority groups. While a more equitable and inclusive redistribution of funds is necessary, it is not sufficient, and a social structure that throws money at a problem runs the risk of thinking it has done enough, while in fact it needs also to examine the biases in which are rooted its policies, mission, vision and practices and renovate itself by eliminating all oppressive aspects. What is more, while the notion of greater opportunity to have one’s voice heard, and the sharing of responsibility appears to be idyllically democratic, below the surface lies currents of power that all too often go unexamined. Indeed, as Clarke (2000) contends, it is naïve to assume a dualistic perspective that there is no continuation of the tensions and inequalities of the past into the present. Rather than having eroded power, Pierre and Peters (2000) argue that the government continues to lead policy simply by influencing through more subtle means, and in a way that Swyngedouw (2005) describes as more ad-hoc and less transparent. This process deflects blame from the government, making it more difficult to name oppression because the supra-structures of governmental power and influence are hiding under a veneer of greater social equality for all.

A healthy dose of scepticism about the appearance of democratic fairness and balance in the process of consultative governance is necessary. Richmond and Shields (2005) note that the although the neo-liberal New Public Management model that relies on third-sector agencies to deliver services is touted as one to be successful and worthy of emulation, the state of the settlement sector demonstrates that this model is in fact failing to provide adequate and equitable services to all. Importantly, there are in fact a number of negative side effects of consultative government that weaken anti-oppression activity. Firstly, consultative governance is a perfect environment to facilitate the promotion of the status quo without the blame. What

are downplayed here are the existing structures of power and resource inequality shaping the consultative environment (Ruggiero, 2006). Issues of structural inclusion and exclusion of groups and issues become more clear when the capacity to organise, and thus to participate in consultation and networks, is examined. For instance, the possibility that networks and organisations that are cherry-picked for consultation are likely to have a long history with the government by which it is consulted. Jessop (1997) explains that often organizations and networks vying for power and resources have been directly or indirect establishment by the government; this severely undermines independence and presents a conflict of interest that could easily go unexamined because of ignorance about relationship history. Conceivably, a long and mutually beneficial relationship could resulting in favouritism not only in the consultation process, but also influence the allocation of financial resources,[3] thus playing a pivotal role in determining an organisation or network's future capacity to organise itself to be involved in future consultation and responsibility. In such a system, the strong are further empowered while the fragile are weakened. This results in the construction of what Barker, Byrne and Veall describe as "new elites" (2000) among interest groups and minorities. A recent example of ranking of minorities is the recent reestablishment of the Canadian court challenges funding for English and French language minority groups alone (Thompson, 2008), leaving other weaker minorities – such as race, and sexual and gender identity minorities - to fend for themselves.

The most insidious aspect of neo-liberal governance is the way in which its funding allocation style of supplying limited, restrictive and unstable resources in the name of inspiring efficiency intensifies the crisis caused by two decades of cutbacks and a diversifying

[3] According to Perrons and Skyers (2003), inclusion is characterised by an intimate linking of empowerment and resources with which to take control, to make changes; in current governance structures, inclusion should be understood as both privileged consultation and reliable access to material resources (Ruggiero, 2006).

immigrant and newcomer population (Richmond & Shields, 2005), and fragments anti-oppression work by inspiring minority groups to jockey for resources, recognition and positions of power, which forces an artificial streamlining of group and individual identity for the facilitation of attaining power. Instead of organising an intersectional approach to fighting oppression, what tends to happen in consultative governance environments is the splintering of broad anti-oppression movements into a number of focused movements. Working individually instead of as a large group weakens attempts to alter the structural oppression that plagues people who fall outside of the narrow category of the normal. Although some activists feel that it is more effective to fight for one issue at a time, "overemphasis on one issue to the neglect of another does little in achieving meaningful social change" (O'Brien, 2005: 17; see also Eng & Hom, 1998) because it does not address the way in which all discrimination is intertwined and rooted in the structures of society and subject to economic control and power relations (Madibbo, 2005: 6); furthermore, it does not recognize the experience of many who encounter compounded discrimination, such as racialised transwomen, who are forced to be outsiders and aliens. Rather, such persons are virtually required to choose one aspect of their identity. Moreover, groups feel a compulsion to privilege one aspect of their group's identity "that in [the] name of an elusive "representativeness" might end up removing differences of identity and interests in the constitution of an homogeneous whole" (Ruggiero, 2006: 13). This in turn creates 'communities' from an outsider perspective, that are not really recognised by those involved, which deny and oppress the more marginalized of the marginalized in the name of liberation. As such, the 'inclusive' consultative governance processes are not in fact open to the participation of all (Swyngedouw, 2005).

Clambering to get the ear of the government and funding agencies shortens what is a vital distance between what Fraser (1992:124) calls "counter-publics" and the mainstream,

against which they are supposed to be a critical voice. From such a close range, counter-publics are unable to effectively do their job, and are in effect not so 'counter' public but a tool of the governing structures. Although Fraser argues that competition between counter-publics means "a widening of discursive contestation" (1992:124), a shift from greater solidarity among counter-publics to in-fighting weakens anti-oppressive movements on the whole. Long-standing prejudices and traditions of discrimination are the fault-lines along which holistic anti-oppression movements splinter under the pressure of consultative governinance practices that encourage minority groups to battle it out for positions of power and funding. Two of the traditions of discrimination that affect LGBTQ immigrants are racism[4] and heterosexism. It is between these two traditions of discourse that LGBTQ immigrants sit, virtually alone and forgotten.

Homophobia in social services

There is a growing body of literature that is concerned with measuring the homophobia and heterosexism of different kinds of service providers such as social workers, psychologists, and health professionals. The belief that homophobia negatively impacts the quality of service provided to LGBTQ clients (Crisp, 2005) and can be devastating for LGBTQ clients (Walters et al., 2001) no doubt inspires academic interest in homophobia of services providers. The main concern about homophobia and heterosexism in service provision is that services provided to LGBTQ clients are poor either because the homophobic service provider purposely provides inferior service or is ineffective – presumably because of stereotypes and lack of

[4] Considering that most immigrants to Canada are not white, even refugees who obtain status because of their sexual orientation, racism is discussed instead of referring to wider xenophobia. According to Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (2001), the top ten source countries are China, India, Philippines, Pakistan, South Korea, Romania, Iran, Russia, Sri Lanka and Morocco. The vast majority of immigrants and newcomers form these nations would be considered visible minorities and potentially subject to discrimination based on race.

knowledge (Peterson 1996 and Travers, 1998 cited in Crisp, 2005). Religious mandates of agencies and funding sources can also affect the codes of ethics and priorities upon which practices and policies are based, argues key informant C, whether this is acceptable to society at large or not. For instance, while active discrimination may not be pursued, discrimination in the form of neglect and omission might occur. Heterosexism can also be manifested, whether purposefully or not, because of the belief that LGBTQ issues have nothing to do with one's work, and that being a 'good' social service provider means being neutral as opposed to actively being anti-oppressive; such things as a lack of awareness of the inequality and discrimination caused by their 'neutral behaviour;' religious, cultural, moral and family values; negative attitudes towards 'pandering' to minority groups and social justice causes; and/or the fear of being mistakenly identified by others as LGBTQ inspire this position (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2002). In general, LGBTQ sexuality is either a problem for the service provider or is ignored as a relevant factor in shaping experiences and thus deserving of recognition.

Some negative consequences of homophobia of service providers include the failure to adequately address clients' problems and needs, devaluing lived experiences, denying a client the right to identify as LGBTQ, and perpetuating self-hatred; in the most extreme cases, conversion or reparative therapies despite the fact that these practices are generally condemned (Crisp, 2005). Other negative consequences include invisibility or negative visibility, unwanted outing, harassment and lack of acceptance leading to further victimisation (Walters et al., 2001). Such consequences are unacceptable, especially considering that they are the result of contact with someone who is supposed to provide assistance. Cluse-Tolar et al. (2004) contend that social workers, for instance, should not be a group that strikes fear in their LGBTQ clients. People who work with marginalized individuals and groups should be the first place where acceptance and respect is found.

Considering the importance of identifying how to reduce instances of homophobia and heterosexism in social service development and delivery, studies that measure homophobia and heterosexism seek to identify factors that are often linked with homophobia and heterosexism. The factors most associated with homophobia and heterosexism amongst social service providers are: religiosity and frequency of attendance, gender, race, age, level of education, and political ideology (Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004). The findings of the study conducted by Cluse-Tolar et al. (2004) that measured homophobia in social work students generally confirmed previous findings of a host of earlier North American studies discussed in their literature review; these being that: high religiosity and frequency of attendance is often associated with homophobia; men are more likely to be homophobic than are women; minorities of other kinds are sometimes less likely to support LGBTQ rights and more likely to be homophobic; older people are more likely to be homophobic; higher education is associated with lower levels of homophobia; and that right-wing political ideologies are often associated with greater levels or homophobia. In a similar study, Walters et al. found that there was even less understanding about and acceptance of trans issues among social workers in comparison to perspectives about gay and lesbian, etc. issues (2001). Cluse-Tolar et al. (2001: 63) discuss the lack of consensus in the literature about whether social work students, for example, are more or less homophobic than other social service providers; there is evidence, however, that positive attitudes and practices can be fostered among people who work with those in need.

Literature about homophobia and heterosexism in social services also focuses on ways to mediate the potential of secondary victimisation of clients by service providers. There are two factors in particular associated with the minimization of homophobia and heterosexism in social service providers. Cluse-Tolar et al. (2004) and Robinson and Ferfolja (2002) have found that the inclusion of anti-oppressive training that addresses homophobia and

heterosexism - and the inequalities that are rooted in these - has a strong positive impact on the ability and openness of service providers to meet the needs of their LGBTQ clients. In fact, Ben-Ari (1998) argues that the most effective time to challenge homophobia and heterosexist attitudes of social service providers is when they are undergoing career training. Although there is a greater openness towards LGBTQ persons among people who choose social work as a profession than many others (Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004), there is always a need for awareness raising. For instance, key informant C finds that during LGBTQ awareness training for settlement workers, even people who consider themselves quite open-minded discover hidden personal biases that they possess. Secondly, positive personal contact with LGBTQ persons was also found to be associated with low levels of homophobia (Walters et al., 2001; Cluse Tolar et al, 2004). Service providers who come into contact with LGBTQ issues and persons are much more likely to be practitioners of 'gay affirmative practice;' it "affirms a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity as an equally positive human experience and expression to heterosexual identity" (Davies, 1996: 25) and is, according to Crisp (2005), increasingly considered the preferred method by which to work with gay and lesbian clients

Likelihood and nature of homophobia and heterosexism in the settlement sector

As previously mentioned, there is not yet a study that measures and explores the nature of homophobia and heterosexism in the immigrant settlement sector, which would be a very worthwhile and enlightening study considering that it is difficult to generalise about settlement workers because of the lack of regulation of the sector and the sheer variety of organisations' reasons for existence and levels of professionalism that provide a wide range of services to immigrants and newcomers to Canada. Nonetheless, being a social service, the findings of studies about the factors linked with greater amounts of homophobia and heterosexism and

ways in which homophobia and heterosexism can be reduced are in many ways applicable to the settlement sector. The potential for homophobia and heterosexism in the way these organisations handle LGBTQ clients is strong given that not only are many *mainstream* organisations and services homophobic/heterosexist, settlement agencies are often culturally specific - because of language and culture-relevant needs - and/or religion-based and are thus less likely to be LGBTQ-affirming. Furthermore, the lack of professionalism and formal training found in the settlement sector makes it less likely that settlement workers are equipped to handle LGBTQ clients' needs. The level of knowledge of LGBTQ issues, and attitudes towards LGBTQ persons and rights would be an excellent basis for future research.

A study about the provision of health services to LGBTQ patients found that the quality of patients' care was very frequently compromised because of patients' unwillingness to come out to their service provider due to a perception of a service provider's incompetence in dealing with LGBTQ persons and/or explicit and even subtle homophobia and heterosexism (CLGRO, 1997). It is not enough, as Crisp (2005) does, to assume that positive, or at least not negative, attitudes towards LGBTQ persons and issues automatically translates into 'gay affirmative practice' that is perceived as such by clients. Because attitudes and behaviours are not the same thing (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975 cite in Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004), and intent is not always perceived by the actor and the receiver in the same way, it is not sufficient to attempt to base a judgment about the homophobia and heterosexism of a social service sector and its practitioners upon measurements and speculations about levels of homophobic and heterosexist attitudes of social service providers and policies alone; it is necessary, rather, to include an analysis of the way services are perceived when determining the need for sensitivity training of social service providers and the development of LGBTQ-friendly practices and spaces.

From a service-seeking perspective, Toronto settlement agencies certainly do not, on the whole, present themselves as being safe places in which a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities will be accepted, respected, and taken into account when services are provided. www.211toronto.ca/ is one of the resource from which newcomers discover what services are available to them in Toronto. It is a resource that requires Internet access and English language skills. It is also a resource to which settlement workers have access when seeking out agencies to which they can refer clients whose needs are beyond their knowledge or abilities. Furthermore, it is Toronto's largest database of service available to the public and it provides a common format in which agencies can advertise their services. A search for all agencies that serve immigrants, refugees and newcomers brings up approximately 200 agencies and a few government services. In total, only eight (8) agencies list any kind of reference to the availability of services and welcome for LGBTQ persons, and some of these references were to different programs or branches of the same organisation, such as Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, and its Newcomer Information Centre. A search using plural and singular versions of key words such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer resulted in almost forty (40) links, however upon further exploration of the services available, about half of the services were available in English or French only, leaving few alternatives for those who have limited English and French language skills and/or who prefer culturally and language specific services. In a city as large and diverse as Toronto, in a country that is one of the few destinations for refugees to seek asylum based on sexual orientation persecution, the situation is quite dire and unacceptable.

On the whole, LGBTQ activist groups and efforts do not meet the needs of LGBTQ immigrants either; LGBTQ immigrants who are racialised suffer from lack of recognition and inclusion in particular. The activities and literature of LGBTQ organisations is unfairly

weighted in the needs of White LGBTQ because of the history of queer politics being dominated by White men (Bérubé, 2001) despite the fact that, especially in multicultural Toronto, the LGBTQ community is very ethnically diverse. Smith (2005) documents that there are 175 LGBTQ nonprofit organizations in Toronto that provide a range of services including advocacy, AIDS/HIV, education/research, recreation, religious, non-HIV health, and other services, and which are organized around gender and/or sexuality divisions as well as social factors like language, religion, ethnicity and ability. Although it should be recognized that people enjoy spending time with and obtaining services from people like themselves, it is also important to recognize that the vast splintering of LGBTQ services in Toronto speaks of double marginalization instead of inclusion and solidarity. A significant factor behind this reality is the pervasive assumed Whiteness and maleness of LGBTQ individuals that has been plaguing LGBTQ activism.

While social service type positions - such as social work - tend to attract persons who are interested and willing to help other (Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004), and that the same can probably be said about the kinds of people who choose to work in immigrant settlement, the ranges of professionalism and training as well as cultural and religious backgrounds and motivations of individuals and agencies in the settlement sector leaves much room for improvement regarding the way in which the settlement sector deals with LGBTQ clients. With an eye to the multifaceted nature of identity, which is so relevant to the settlement sector's range of clients of many cultures and races, etc., the settlement sector can turn to the growing body of literature about LGBTQ-affirmative practice to develop new policies and procedures so as to better welcome and assist LGBTQ newcomers.

Gaps in LGBTQ discourses and practices: The need for LGBTQ-sensitive settlement

Maurice Poon's (2004) critique of the LGBTQ social service sector and literature is based upon a content analysis of two of the most internationally prominent journals that deal with LGBTQ issues: *Journal of Homosexuality* and *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Service*. Looking at a total of 79 issues from between the years 1990 to 1998 to get a sense of the priorities within the discipline, Poon (2004) found that there is a drastic under-representation of discussion about the needs and experiences of LGBTQ persons of colour compared to the population percentage they make up in their new homeland. The rare mention of LGBTQ persons of colour generally fell into two categories: either they were discussed completely separately, a commonly used strategy that both Others and diverts attention from the need to make structural changes to place everyone on equal footing and disguises diversity within so-called minority 'groups'; or included as part of a sample with white participants under the assumption of homogeneity with the anomalies in the data never attributed to racial differences, resulting in the disregard of the variation within the LGBTQ experiences and needs as well as producing over-generalized results (Poon, 2004). Essentially, "contemporary gay and lesbian social service literature is saturated with White middle/upper-class values" (Poon, 2004: 94).

In a similar study of the trends in sampling methods of a subsequent 103 articles in the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services* from between the years 1997 and 2000, Sullivan and Losberg (2003) reported comparable findings. There was a severe under-representation, lack of mention, or studies about the intersectionality of ethnicity or country-of-origin (or any other migration-related information) with the experience of being a sexual orientation minority, which is particularly problematic considering that the majority of the studies drew samples from the United States (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003: 152-3, 156), a multicultural nation.

Furthermore, Sullivan and Losberg found that researchers were wont to aggregate their data for analysis instead of conceptually defining the population sample and consistently reporting characteristics, thus ignoring the vast diversity of social factors, consolidating respondents into highly heterogenous groups, and not recognising the way that differences and similarities affect the generalisability of the data (Sullivan & Losberg, 2003). Sullivan and Losberg (2003) do recognise the challenges of thorough data collection and reporting, and the potential problem of over-complex analyses. Their recommendations to improve the usefulness and reliability of studies emphasise the importance of there being standards and expectations about the reporting and dis-aggregation of data, as well as discussion of the sample-selection biases, so that study results are not over-simplistic and misleading (Sullivan and Losberg, 2003). Otherwise, studies that include reference to sexual orientation variations will be of little use to sectors like the immigration sector that is in need of sound information about the specific experiences of racialised LGBTQ person who might be coming to their agencies for assistance.

Meezan and Martin (2003) call for more social research to be done about LGBTQ populations, and warn that future research needs to depart from the trend of assuming that assuming all LGBTQ persons identify with a monolithic group 'culture.' They emphasise in particular the need to recognise and makes allowances for the complexity of identity and socio-economic forces during all phases of research, as well as cultural/heritage and gender/sex influences on identity formation and understanding (Meezan & Martin, 2003). While their call for the recognition of complexity is important, it is not sufficient. Books about LGBTQ issues tend to focus on token characteristics and sub-groups instead of recognizing the intersectionality of oppression; this tendency results in Othering and segregating subgroups instead of viewing them as a legitimate part of society as a whole. Essentially, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. Poon (2004) describes true inclusion as more than giving a

special voice to the previously unheard. Inclusion is a more equitable distribution of resources and "a full incorporation into the current discourse" (Poon, 2004: 101). To truly respect each person as an equal member of a society, it is not sufficient to highlight extreme specialness, whether it is positive or negative. Recognition of the heterogeneity of the social fabric is necessary as well.

The exclusion that LGBTQ immigrants face also encompasses the immigrant service sector and scholarship that could and should be their advocate, indicating the need for anti-oppressive activism within the immigrant settlement sector. Immigration scholarship that does recognise sexuality generally focuses solely on sexuality as a motivating factor for migrating as a refugee (McGhee, 2003; Drolet, 2005; Lubhéid, 2004) and the way the LGBTQ 'community' can assist by sponsoring queer refugees (O'Brien, 2005). Otherwise, immigration scholarship in general ignores or conflates sexuality with gender (Lubhéid, 2004: 227), exacerbating the paucity of literature about LGBTQ newcomers. Very little literature exists that documents and/or evaluates the finer practical details of settlement service provision for, and used by, LGBTQ newcomers to Toronto, or to anywhere for that matter. Practices like social work, which have established literature, are ahead of the settlement sector in terms of its recognition of the needs of what Morales and Sheafor call 'special population groups' (2002). While the classification of groups such as LGBTQ individuals as 'special populations' serves to reinforce the normal/other binary, it is at least a step in the right direction that social work textbooks recognise the existence of diversity other than race in populations in a way that immigration literature has yet to match.

Part 2: Settlement sector capacity building

Drawing upon culturally competent practice

Given that there is prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQ persons and persons of colour, and that LGBTQ newcomers to Toronto are likely to experience this simultaneously from both the general population and even from social service providers upon which they rely, it is clear that steps need to be taken to improve the situation. Guided by the premise of the Toronto-based 'among friends' training project for settlement workers are LGBTQ issues that is based upon the notion that the most effective way help LGBTQ newcomers and immigrants is not to develop one service but rather to initiate systemic change and increase the number of service options by building the capacity of the sector to serve LGBTQ clients with respect and dignity, as suggested by key informant C, the questions that guide the following section of this paper are: How to eradicate prejudice? How to develop and provide respectful and relevant services? Coming from an anti-oppressive perspective that oppression is a social ill based upon proximity to arbitrarily valued identity features and not because of intrinsic deficits of individuals, and that no one culture and way of being is superior, the theoretical perspective that shapes this paper is chosen for the way in which it respects the individual and questions societal norms by recognising and valuing diversity and multiple ways of being as well as the belief that all people deserve to be treated with respect and provided with relevant and personalized service. The theoretical perspective in question is culturally competent practice; van den Bergh and Crisp's (2004) argue that it can be understood to include LGBTQ identity and thus be a useful tool for sectors that deal with LGBTQ clients, a transfer that suits the settlement sector well because of the multicultural and diversity of sexual and gender identities of the clients. van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) argue that the culturally competent practice model can not be expanded to include other aspects of identity - such as self-identified sex,

self-identified gender, age class, ability, race, etc. – that need to be taken into consideration when diagnosing how best to design and provide social services in order to ensure equity. Essentially, “effective and accountable practice with sexual [and other kinds of] minorities is not a "special interest group" issue, but a core part of the cultural competence agenda in social work” (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 236). Considering that elements of identity are understood in relation to each other (Garnets, 2007), it is crucial to recognise each aspect, the interconnections, and the resulting interconnections of discrimination (McAuliffe, 2008). McAuliffe et al. (2008) warn that having too particularistic a focus can be problematic, though neither is a universalistic perspective effective. As such, a balance needs to be struck.

What is slightly awkward about van den Bergh and Crisp’s inclusion of sexual and gender identity into the culturally competent practice model is that sexual and gender identities are created and understood within culture, not apart from culture, betraying a neutral view of White Western culture and that they have not considered the kinds of multicultural, multiracial contexts such as settlement work in which this model might be applied. Nonetheless, their assertion that culturally competent practice is transferable to social service work can be salvaged. Settlement workers who apply the culturally competent practice model to their work need to take into account the multifaceted identities of their clients, the facets being defined within the particular culture of the client. When practiced properly, culturally competent practices can be affirming of all facts of identity, including sexual and gender identity.

The culturally competent practice model, developed by Sue, Arredondo and McDavis is cited by both McAuliffe (2008) and van den Bergh and Crisp (2004), and has three main components: awareness of personal biases and attitudes, knowledge of the worldview of others, and developing effective intervention skills.

a) Attitudes

Service providers need to not only be aware of his/her biases and culture-centrism and the influences of this on his/her work, but also to be comfortable with differences between the self and clients (McAuliffe, 2008; van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004; Bieschke et al., 2007). The roots of biases that need to be taken into consideration are cultural (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004) as well as the nature of the privilege or lack thereof that one possesses because of the kind of person one is and the proximity of one's identity has with societal values. Of particular importance in the eradication of oppression is the recognition of privilege (Yee & Dumbrill, 2003); in particular, what exactly it is that society privileges. Otherwise, it is difficult to name oppression, whether oppression caused or experienced.

Service providers need to become aware that there is a pervasive heterosexual privilege in most societies upon which values social structures and expectations are built. Service providers need to develop self-awareness and recognise where they sit in relation to societal values by reflecting on the development, influences and experiences of his/her own sexual identity, by reflecting upon actual previous contact with, and reactions to LGBTQ persons as opposed to simply considering stereotypes, and reflecting upon one's behaviour and responses to LGBTQ and the legitimacy of these (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). The practices of highlighting dissonance and invoking empathy are successful ways to eradicate injustice (Pedersen et al., 2005), likely because of the way that the beliefs and emotions of prejudiced individuals are engaged (see Derman-Sparks, 1994 for a discussion of the importance of engaging people at an emotional and personal level through life-changing experiences). Reflecting upon one's privilege and the impact of one's privilege upon one's perspective and subsequent behaviour, as well as determining whether one's experience mirror or contradict stereotypes about LGBTQ persons is an important first step in eradicating prejudice that, if left

unchecked, will negatively impact LGBTQ clients with which one comes into contact. It is through engaging experiences that it is possible to lay bare the privilege that these people have; this is a step that is particularly important to meaningful social change.

The reason that the above methods are important is because the focus is not on changing the views of the minorities but rather the mainstream that holds the power (Pedersen et al., 2005). For it is not just individual prejudice that it problematic but also power imbalances between groups that are not recognised by the group in power. Pedersen et al. (2005) remind that there is a strong connection between individual attitudes with the social, structural and political context of the individual, and as such it is important to combat both individual and group prejudice in tandem by engaging individuals in dialogue about their privilege and the way the context in which they live allows them to benefit whether they do so intentionally or not. Once individual privilege is understood, and the connection of privilege with oppressive social structures is recognised, the groundwork for meaningful social action is laid.

Whether aware or ignorant of oppression, strong reactions are often the result of the development of a new consciousness of one's role in oppression either through purposeful action and/or through submission to standards and norms of the status quo. For example, a study about the attitudes of White American college students about race documents not only the importance of breaking the cycle of oppression-blindness but also that a crucial step to harnessing the outcome of awareness-raising is the need to find a way for individuals to balance negativity and guilt about the oppressive role they play with positive ideas about the self (Reason & Evans, 2007). To promote a healthy processing of the emotions tapped by the awareness raising process (see Derman-Sparks 1994 about the emotional journey of awareness raising), and to harness and channel the conviction produced, Pedersen et al. (2005) contend

that it is important to properly debrief after all activities aimed to generate a broader understanding of, through the laying bare of, hierarchies and assumptions that inform and are generated by social structures and systems that oppress.

Evaluation of beliefs and practices can face resistance. Attempts to raise awareness to do not always succeed in garnering new converts, particularly on an institutional level wherein there are a lot of rules, regulations, habits and procedures that are at risk of needing an overhaul. Change is not often warmly welcomed, especially at 'the centre,' which faces more of a threat than the limbs that simply do what they are told, sometimes resulting in a strong backlash that involves efforts to argue and justify the status quo (McDonald & Coleman, 1999). McDonald and Coleman (1999), note, however, that it is not only 'the centre' that might resist change; other individuals and groups who compete for small benefits at the bottom levels of the hierarchies in society might feel that by sharing the advocacy limelight with other issues, their issue will be less adequately addressed. This calls to mind the earlier discussion of the divisions between minority groups instead of solidarity.

b) Knowledge

Through personal and professional activities, service providers should seek to gain an understanding of culture and specificities about certain identity 'groups' such as the LGBTQ 'community,' argue van den Bergh and Crisp (2004). Not only is it important to know about other cultures, it is important to recognise that services need to be tailored to account for specificities (McAuliffe, 2008). Scholars who advocate that knowing about a culture will give service providers an edge when working with clients list a number of things and types of things about which service providers should educate themselves, such as values, beliefs and norms (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). These include: communication styles, role expectations, non-

verbal communication, order of priorities, formality/informality of relationships, notions of modesty, conceptions of beauty, ideals governing child-raising, relationship to animals and nature, patterns of superior/subordinate relationships, definitions of sin, conceptions of right and wrong, courtship practices, etc. (McAuliffe, 2008: 29). Also important to note are:

> "(a) key terminology related to the cultural group, (b) demographic characteristics, (c) intragroup diversity, (d) group history and traditions, (e) group experiences with discrimination, harassment, and oppression, (f) impact of social policies and social welfare systems on the group, (g) social science theories used to inform practice with the group, (h) community resources for the group, and (i) culturally sensitive service practice models" (van der Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 228).

Specific to LGBTQ persons, service providers are recommended to learn about: "a) the coming out process as an identity development model, (b) heterosexism and homophobia as structural impediments to human development, and (c) cultural victimization as a risk factor for health and well-being of sexual minorities" (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 235) as well as legal statuses and lack of legal protection and rights in certain areas (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). It might also be relevant to learn about the lack of the awareness of newcomers of the rights they now are entitled to enjoy in Canada, as a same-sex couple for instance, so as to know what information is necessary to impart to LGBTQ newcomer clients.

While the acknowledgement of biases and changing of attitude might be the most challenging component of culturally competent practice, the knowledge component is arguably the most controversial. The reason that 'knowing' culture is emphasised in culturally competent practice guidelines is that "Subjective culture is especially important in the work of counselling because clients operate out of implicit norms and values that affect such crucial

aspects of life as relationships, career behaviors, aspirations, and support systems" (McAuliffe, 2008: 26). The problem, however, is that culture is not in fact 'knowable.' Cultures change over time and place and from person to person. Yee and Dumbrill (2003) caution that teaching about a culture for sensitization purposes tends to freeze a culture in time and might reinforce stereotypes instead of reflecting the diversity within cultural groups. McAuliffe (2008) provides some suggestions about how to work flexibly with culture: recognise fluidity and changing social construction of culture instead of viewing culture as essences, and be very tentative about making generalizations and "treating cultural norms as absolutes" (25). The kinds of cautionary messages that culturally competent practice champions send out include the necessity to foreground the idea that identities are multidimensional (Bieschke et al., 2007; Fassinger & Arsenau, 2007). It is important not to stereotype, but to recognise that labels such as lesbian can be interpreted and lived in many ways. As such, it is essential to listen to what the client has to say about his or herself. Although van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) propose that it is important to know about the way sociocultural dynamics impact the lived experiences of minorities, McAuliffe et al. have a stronger argument, recommending "*vigilance* about the impact of culture on people accompanied by a set of culturally alert practices" (2008: 571 [italics added]) instead of using a prescriptive approach. It is not as important to know specific facts, as it is to know that there is difference and that difference impacts in different ways. Being open, as opposed to prescriptive, is key.

c) Skill

Bieschke et al. (2007) are concerned that not enough service providers are able to translate their LGBTQ positive and affirmative attitudes into practice. It is through skill and intervention that the attitude changes and inclusiveness become tangible. Skill is the least

discussed component of the culturally competent practice model. Despite the paucity of information about skill and intervention, it is in no way less important.

McAuliffe (2008) emphasises that service providers not be tied to one way of dealing with situations but to be able to function flexibly, as well as be able to determine and distinguish situations in which clients are unnecessarily blaming themselves for something outside of their control. Another attribute that separates the skilled from the unskilled is the ability to "send and receive a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal messages as well as using culturally syntonic approaches" (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 223). Other suggestions are not so explicit, such as van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) recommending seeking out training and keeping one's knowledge base up to date. Another facet of the discussion about skill loops back to the first component, attitude and bias. van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) highlight that developing self-awareness is a skill, whereas in fact it is more a necessary foundational step.

Becoming LGBTQ-affirming

McAuliffe et al. (2008) provide an excellent framework for how to provide culturally competent services that transfers very well from a counselling setting to that of immigration settlement work regarding LGBTQ clients. The framework is in three parts: accessibility, assessment and intervention (McAuliffe et al., 2008). Accessibility considerations to be made include, but are not limited to: approachability and trustworthiness, use of relevant and considerate language, empathy, establishment of rapport, having and using cultural knowledge so that the client doesn't have to completely educate the service provider especially about communication styles and cultural phenomena such as core values and beliefs, etc., broaching cultural differences (McAuliffe et al., 2008: 588). Assessment comprises, but is not limited to: being capable of interpreting client's verbal and non-verbal communication and behaviour, and

knowing how to sensitively ask questions, and knowing what to ask, about the client and his/her experiences so as to obtain an understanding of the oppression faced by the client, the impact it has on his/her life, his/her cultural values and how they guide his/her life (McAuliffe et al., 2008: 588). Goals of intervention can include challenging internalised oppression and advocacy (McAuliffe et al., 2008). Using this framework as an organisational schema, the following sections will include a critical review and discussion of the literature that is relevant to each of the three sections to determine which of the recommendations are applicable to the settlement sector.

a) Accessibility

The ability of a service provider to provide effective assistance is curtailed if they are not aware of crucial details about the identity and experiences of their clients (Maccio and Doueck, 2002). As such, the ideal situation is for a client to 'come out' to a non-judgmental service provider. There are a number of factors that affect the choice of if, when, and to whom someone might 'come out' that are beyond the control of service providers; in a study about gay men, Schope (2002) discovered these factors to be religiosity, age, past and current area of residence (e.g. urban or rural), stage of gay-identity formation, cohort, profession and hierarchical position. It is also important to recognize that 'coming out' as a speech act is a particularly Western practice (Nelson, 2004; see also Kama, 2006 and Beckstead & Israel, 2007 for discussions about the non-universalist nature of the Western concept of sexuality), and that there are various ways and levels of subtlety that can LGBTQ persons may choose to express their sexuality and/or gender. Consider also that some might choose not to label themselves LGBTQ because passing as heterosexual is the only kind of privilege within their grasp (Bing, 2004 in Beckstead & Israel, 2007). Furthermore, the act of, or approach to,

‘coming out’ cannot be forced or dictated. Rather, ‘coming out’ can only be inspired by trust, and the best way to nurture this is to proactively demonstrate affirmative attitudes and policies. There is no reason to expect someone to feel comfortable and not at risk unless they have been given a clear message.

Although LGBTQ persons tend to prefer to receive services from LGBTQ service providers because of the belief and likelihood that they will be more helpful (Maccio & Doueck, 2002), the majority of newcomers to Canada will inevitably be in contact with heterosexually identified settlement workers. Considering that not knowing what kind of treatment to expect is a deterrent to ‘coming out’ (Dyson et al., 2002) – risks include loss of relationship, rejection, misunderstanding, etc. (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006), and that LGBTQ persons tend to construct “communication systems that conceal more than reveal” because of fear (Kama, 2006: 124-5), it is crucial that settlement agencies be aware and take control of the image they project, ensuring that they are not representing a homophobic and heterosexist image if they do not identify as such. Key informant M mentioned that settlement workers also need to be aware that some of their clients might conceive of settlement worker as extensions of the government and fear that the information divulged in interactions with settlement workers will be policed and used against the newcomer client. As such, it is vital that settlement workers and agencies embody approachability and affirmation. The Ryerson Positive Space Ally training manual argues that, “Unless you have given some indication of your feelings or beliefs about sexual orientation, they may have no way of knowing in advance whether you will be positive or negative” (2006: 37). Key informant M recommends that straight allies broach the subject of LGBTQ rights in Canada, etc. Casually bringing up LGBTQ issues in discussion about other things will indicate levels of knowledge and attitude

towards LGBTQ persons and issues, providing clients an opportunity to gauge the risks, the pros and cons, of 'coming out' to this person.

Language, being a prime indicator or attitudes and knowledge, informs clients and potential clients of what to expect. Overwhelmingly, using appropriate language when communicating with LGBTQ persons is considered vital to establishing trust with clients and potential clients (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004; Beckstead & Israel, 2007; Syzmanski, 2008; Positive Space Ryerson, 2006). Inappropriate homophobic and heterosexist language is likely to inhibit a person's willingness to disclose information about their specific needs and challenges that present themselves as a result of minority sexual and/or gender identities (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). The employment of non-heterosexist, gender-neutral inclusive language (Syzmanski, 2008) such as "relationship status and partner, rather than marital status and husband or wife" (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 232) will demonstrate an awareness of, and perhaps lack of judgment about, family and relationship ties that are same-sex. Not only is it important to use such inclusive language when speaking directly with LGBTQ persons, it is also necessary to employ inclusive language in all advertising materials, whether print like pamphlets, or web-based such as an organisation's website or Toronto 211 organisation summary. Another important place for explicitly neutral and inclusive language is organisation mission, value, and policy statements, etc., which will be discussed in greater length elsewhere.

Language is not the only way to express openness and a welcoming attitude about multi sexual and gender identities. Key informant M affirmed that settlement space can and needs to be marked as safe and positive in symbolic ways, such as the visible display of brochures, books, and newsletters on LGBTQ issues such as gay parenting, coming out, domestic partnerships, and legal rights, in the settlement agency office space as well as displaying a pink

lambda triangle or rainbow flag. Symbol sends a message to all, not just to LGBTQ persons, that LGBTQ identities are affirmed in the marked space and that discriminating language and behaviour from anyone, staff or client, will not be tolerated (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006). van den Bergh and Crisp argue that these are effective ways in which to create a "gay-safe milieu," indicating the openness of staff to the discussion of LGBTQ issues (2004: 232). In the context of a settlement agency, marked positive space would indicate awareness of and openness to discussing specific challenges of LGBTQ migration and settlement experiences, and a willingness and knowledge about how best to overcome these challenges and mediate specific risks.

Not all LGBTQ persons from around the world can be expected to understand symbolic images like the pink lambda triangle or the rainbow flag; Key informant M reminds that symbols such as a rainbow flag could be conflated with the rainbow that symbolizes Christianity. Also, not everyone can be expected to understand concepts such as transsexual or terms like LGBTTQIQTS or other variations. Thus, efforts to demonstrate LGBTQ-friendliness would likely be most effective when combined as well as in many languages, according to key informant M. Furthermore, it might be particularly useful, because many settlement agencies work with a very multicultural and multilingual client-base and the reasons why people might choose not to 'come out' discussed above, to indicate openness to *all* sexualities and (see, for example, the mission statement in Positive Space Ryerson, 2006: 6), as opposed to using labels such as gay, bisexual or transgender.[5] Because notions of sexuality and gender are culture-bound, compounded by the fact that not all people choose to label themselves or identify their behaviour the way another person might, the use of specific

[5] The author recognises that this paper does in fact uses labels that are not relevant to everyone strictly out of the need for brevity's sake…

identity labels still might deter a client from discussing the specific challenges they face because of the way their sexuality or gender might transgress certain norms.

It is important to note that symbols of any kind can be interpreted in multiple and unexpected ways and that therefore there will, of course, be some misunderstandings that might occur. Seeing a rainbow flag sticker in an agency space or website might lead a potential client to believe that the persons responsible for this symbol are experts in LGBTQ issues and the person or place to contact in the case of a crisis, when that might not in fact be the case. Should such a misunderstanding happen, it is crucial to be prepared with at list of pertinent local resources to which clients can be referred. Anyone advertising LGBTQ-affirmative attitudes and policies, etc. should at least be armed with a basic understanding of LGBTQ issues and heterosexual privilege, as well as resources (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006).

As there is no public regulation about the display of symbols such as rainbow flags, so there is no way to ensure that everyone displaying this symbol is fact open-minded about sexuality and gender diversity and that the marked space is in fact safe. As such, the employment of anti-discriminatory language about sexual and gender diversity, as well as the display and quality of materials about LGBTQ issues and resources must not be indiscriminate but be very carefully thought through. The fact that Positive Space Ally stickers at Ryerson are only provided to persons who have undergone ally training, and that stickers are removed when they are found to be misused (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006) underscores the importance of the ethical use of symbols and language, etc. Education about LGBTQ issues, heterosexual privilege, and available resources are the foundation of the Ryerson Positive Space Ally program (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006); all settlement agencies intending to improve their LGBTQ-affirmative image can take a leaf out of Ryerson's book. Verification and evaluation

of anti-discriminatory policies and practices, availability of resources and referrals, and management the agency environment (such as not allowing homophobic jokes or comments by clients to go unchallenged) is an important regular activity so as to constantly be improving the welcome received by LGBTQ clients.

Another challenge of actively expressing that a space and related services are LGBTQ friendly can lead some clients and coworkers to assume that a space and/or certain service providers are LGBTQ-identified and to a backlash (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006). This can be particularly problematic if those who assume as much are homophobic, potentially causing discord between coworkers and/or discriminating behaviour of clients towards LGBTQ-perceived staff and maybe even a loss of clientele or vandalism. Also, there exists the fear that access to information about LGBTQ issues and identity will affect one's identity, which is an invalid fear (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006). Despite all this, actively pursuing an anti-oppressive strategy which includes LGBTQ issues in a settlement agency is an excellent opportunity to eradicate homophobia and heterosexism that pervades amongst settlement and other social service providers and organisations as well as the newcomer population, two needs that key informant M emphasizes. He suggests providing information about LGBTQ rights and issues to all newcomers; this is an excellent way to educate and to demonstrate that in Canada, LGBTQ persons and issues are discussed, addressed and valued. In essence, it is important to involve and raise awareness of the whole community about LGBTQ issues and rights (Positive Space Ryerson, 2006).

Faith- and culture-based agencies, especially those with like clientele, might offer particular resistance on both the agency and clientele levels to any efforts of insiders or outsiders to raise the profile of LGBTQ issues and rights and the inclusion of these in policy and practice. As there is no regulation regarding LGBTQ-inclusive anti-oppression as the

foundation of settlement practice, it is difficult to keep any agency accountable for its actions, especially if funding is not tied to adherence to Human Rights codes. The Canadian context, in which much is made of the right of groups to live by their own creeds, it is especially difficult ensure that oppression based on cultural and/or religious beliefs does not creep into social services. Nonetheless, argues key informant C, the job of the settlement worker is to provide appropriate, dignified and relevant service inline with Human Rights codes to clients without allowing personal beliefs to interfere, personal beliefs being something that should be left at home. van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) contend that service providers who have negative attitudes towards sexual and gender identity diversity should obtain supervision and/or refrain from treating clients in what would be un-affirming ways in order to minimize damage. Faith- and culture-based agencies that are not interested in affirming sexual and gender diversity can at least provide effective referral and maybe even some information. Positive Space Ryerson (2006) argues that it is not the place of the service provider to judge; rather, their role is to ensure that needs are met in the most affirming way. It is important that LGBTQ newcomer rights' activists target faith- and culture-based settlement agencies, as well as mainstream agencies, in their efforts to provide accurate information about LGBTQ issues and rights as well as affirmative services available nearby.

b) Assessment

Especially in situations where a service provider is unaware of crucial details about the sexuality and identity of their clients, as discussed above, their attitude about multiple kinds of sexualities and gender identities, and the way this guides their inquiry, is crucial to providing the best service to (potentially) LGBTQ clients. As previously discussed, the impact of homophobia and heterosexist behaviours and assumptions can serve to unintentionally re-

traumatise and ineffectively serve clients, which one would hope is the last thing that a service provider wants to do to their client in their role as helper and healer. The most fundamental way in which a service provider can reduce the chance of ineffectively serving their client and/or traumatising them is to function from a gay-affirmative perspective as opposed to denial or a sexual re-orientation approach (see Maccio & Doueck, 2002); this includes not assuming heterosexuality or gender, viewing same-sex attractions as a normal variation of sexuality, and recognising that there are various stages and ways to be 'out' (Appleby & Anastas 1998 in van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). Also important is to not pigeonhole clients into identity categories or into defining themselves, as this would simply be another form of sexual regulation (Nelson, 2004). Gutierrez (2004) discusses resentment of a number of women who are very frustrated that others categorise them as transgender and of a specific as opposed to fluid sexual identity when they do not see themselves that way, and this negatively impacted their relationship with individuals and institutions that treated them so. Sexual identity and gender regulation could cause further trauma to the client and cause resentment and distrust in the client/service provider relationship, which needs to be avoided.

Gathering information is an integral part of service provision in the immigrant settlement sector. The assumptions that the settlement worker makes about the client and about people in general affect the kinds of questions asked, and the interpretation of the responses. It is important not to assume, for instance, the sexual orientation of one's client (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004), nor, for that matter, what gender they identify as. van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) also mention finding out how 'out' a person is and in which parts of their life and communities. Another assumption that settlement workers tend to make, argues key informant M, is that newcomers will wish to live in or near their ethnic peers in Toronto, not conceiving that there might be reasons such as sexual and gender identity that divide

communities and that being near one's ethnic peers might therefore be very unsafe. To be able to move beyond one's personal biases and assumptions, particularly important in a multicultural setting, it is important to be open to the multifaceted and unique nature of each client's identity instead of making assumptions based upon the colour of their skin or ethnicity (Beckstead & Israel, 2007; see also Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2008; key informant M). So as to facilitate the development of tailored service such as a settlement plan, Beckstead and Israel (2007) argue it is important to discover about all clients, whatever their gender and sexual identity, is their relationship with their cultural 'community/ies' and the kinds of resources available or not available to them accordingly, from whom the client fears rejection and expects acceptance, whether there are role models, family and friends available and what kinds of support can be expected from these sources. Settlement workers need to be open to the fact that newcomers might want to explore other communities, suggested key informant M, than the one which their skin colour, race, ethnicity and/or religion implies.

Since LGBTQ persons come in all shapes, sizes, cultures, etc. (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004), it is important to not only recognise the possibility that one's clients might not identify as heterosexual or with the gender that our society associates with their bodies, but also to recognise the way in which an alternate sexual or gender identity can impact every area of a person's life and needs. This is especially important for settlement workers who are trying to diagnose, from a migrant's story, what his or her needs might be. Instead of focusing on the sexual and gender identity of the client, however, it is important to focus on the challenges in the life of an LGBTQ person (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). There are four arenas of life that van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) denote as particularly affected by sexual orientation and gender identity: health, relationships and families, work and education, legal and political rights. Other factors to be taken into account because of their relevance to the experiences of

migrants are religion, identity conflicts, cohorts and peers, contexts of discrimination, ability, geography, and self esteem. A number of these will be discussed below.

- **Family**

Beckstead and Israel emphasise the importance of discovering the relationship/family status of one's client (2007); this, of course, is to be done in a very delicate and non-judgemental fashion using the most neutral terms possible, as discussed previously. This can provide the client with an opportunity to supply details of their situation without requiring them to explicitly label themselves and explain what that specific label means to them in their cultural context. Importantly, whatever the client defines as family needs to be accepted by the settlement worker (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004) as much as possible within the confines of the refugee claim system, etc. Settlement workers need to be aware that it is possible that their clients have not claimed partners as family because of their fear of persecution, and that this might cause distress. Also, same-sex families, or LGBTQ persons who are not in a relationship at the moment but might be one day would benefit from information about support for same-sex parents and families, as well as adoption and foster care options and restrictions in the Canadian context (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004).

Parents and other adults are not the only people who might be LGBTQ-identified; children and youth can develop LGBTQ identities as they grow up and discover who they are. Especially in a context of migration, financial and emotional dependence upon their families leaves LGBTQ children and youth particularly vulnerable to trauma from sexual and gender orientation censure from family members, compounded by whatever discrimination they face in the public realm (see Lepischak, 2004 for a discussion of LGBTQ minors). Reasons why an LGBTQ identity of a child might be problematic within a family can be the focus of individualism of the identity and how it transgresses a more collective understanding of the

family and the roles of the members (Walters et al., 2001). Also, inheritance traditions and the family name might cause friction between LGBTQ youth and their parents (Beckstead & Israel, 2007). It is important that settlement workers take into consideration the needs of children and youth as well, speaking to the children themselves instead of assuming the parent knows all and speaks for their child.

- **Isolation and lack of community**

Isolation and lack of community is a common feature of the immigrant experience; it is of particular relevance, however, to the LGBTQ migrant who commonly is without family and community support if they choose to not lead a double life (for a discussion, see Nobbs & Abualsameed, N.D.). Another reason for isolation can be that programs, services and groups that deal with LGBTQ clients are not geared towards all age groups. Fassinger and Arsenau (2007) comment that, for instance, youth and older LGBTQ persons face greater isolation because youth may not be welcome at adult events, and seniors might have fewer social and familial networks upon which they can rely in their older years; this is just as likely to be the case in ethno-specific LGBTQ groups (Nobbs & Abualsameed, N.D.). Racism is another isolating factor that non-White LGBTQ persons contend with on a daily basis, even from other LGBTQ persons (Walters et al., 2001; Nobbs & Abualsameed, N.D.). This kind of isolation lends itself to a particular vulnerability to exploitation, youth included (Nobbs & Abualsameed, N.D.). Although discussing American aboriginals, Walters et al. (2001) note that isolated LGBTQ persons far from home and from any kind of familial or community support are easy targets for gay porn, prostitution and survival sex. Considering the language and credential assessment barriers that bar many immigrants from finding decent employment shortly after arrival in Canada and limited access to resources (Nobbs & Abualsameed, N.D.), experiencing racialisation from LGBTQ persons and communities (Beckstead & Israel, 2007), as well as

being without family and community support, and, makes it especially important that settlement workers make a particular effort to recognise and reduce the isolation and vulnerability of their clients. It is crucial to discuss with immigrants and newcomers their expectations of the relationship and support they might be able to have with and get from existing cultural communities and groups here in Toronto, including their fears of rejection and what is the reason this fear exists. In such cases where immigrants and newcomers fear isolation because of their sexual and/or gender identity, it is important that settlement workers be equipped to connect their clients with alternative resources. Canada is a well-known site of asylum for refugees who are oppressed in their nations of origin because of their sexual and gender orientation. At whatever age they come, and they sometimes come alone at a very young age (Nobbs & Abualsameed, N.D.), the network that settlement workers can assist their clients in building, so as to provide a buffer of social support (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004), needs to take into considering the acceptance of LGBTQ identity.

- **Cohort**

The generalisations about cohorts in mainstream social service literature that emphasises a cultural competent practice model is only marginally relevant to the settlement sector and what it needs to understand so as to provide effective service, or at least referral, to LGBTQ immigrants and refugee clients. Fassinger and Arsenau comment that older LGBT persons are more likely to be closeted, isolated, have greater degrees of internalized homophobia, and be more careful and wary of risky sexual situations and behaviours because of the HIV/AIDS scare that might have taken many of their friends in their youth (2007; see also van den Bergh and Crisp, 2004 for a discussion of age and cohort genralisations). This assumption about characteristics of cohorts and age groups is only relevant to a North American experience; this assumption does not take into account the context from which many LGBT migrants come,

such as the history of LGBTQ political movements or lack thereof. As such, service providers working with LGBTQ migrants need to put aside their cohort assumptions and listen to what the client has to say before deciding what their needs are and how they are to be met. Over time, a service provider can build a knowledge base about the experiences of LGBTQ persons around the globe. Nonetheless, the most effective way to deal with LGBTQ immigrants and refugees is no doubt to listen to, respect, and believe their stories about their experiences, challenges and needs. Experiences of LGBTQ identity, and the definitions of those terms vary so much across the globe that there is little point in trying to develop a taxonomy of global terms and accompanying experiences. As discussed before, it is not the identity that matters so much as the existing needs and challenges to be dealt with by each unique person that need to be the focus of a service provider's problem-solving efforts.

- **Self esteem**

Self esteem is notoriously low among LGBTQ persons. Overwhelmingly, the researchers emphasise the importance of recognising, and mediating internalised shame and homophobia, not just external oppression, (Dyson et al., 2002: 2; van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004; Beckstead & Israel, 2007; Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2008; Syzmanski, 2008); this low state of self esteem and respect can be a "seedbed" for problems such as mental health issues and substance abuse (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 229). In order to minimize the negative impact of internalised homophobia, it is important to recognise indicators of internalised homophobia (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 233), such as comments about low self worth, etc., as well as the nature of their internalized homophobia (Beckstead & Israel, 2007: 233). A source of low self-esteem can be the constant social censure and disapproval experienced in private spaces as well as public spaces, such as the work place and social venues. Not only do LGBTQ people sometimes experience major moments of discrimination, which can cause and reinforce low self esteem,

in major ways such as the refusal of accommodation, daily incidents such as "(a) social repercussions for showing affection to a partner in public, (b) intolerant reactions when GLBT clients disclose their sexual orientation to family, friends, and coworkers, and (c) pressure for GLBT clients to censor details about their experiences as a GLBT person" (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004: 230). This kind of treatment wears down feelings of self-worth; as such, it is crucial that settlement workers discover whether these kinds of experiences are or could be experienced by their client, so that clients can be forewarned and so that the settlement strategy developed can be tailored to minimize this kind treatment so detrimental to the mental health and self esteem of LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers.

- **Integrated identity and conflict**

Developing an integrated identity, no matter the state of self-esteem, is noted to be particularly challenging (Walters et al., 2001). Considering that many cultures and religions are based upon heterosexual norms and strict roles and categories, and that in a new place one has to learn new codes of behaviour for roles of the same title, it is no easy feat to reconcile and blend one's 'transgressive' sexual and/or gender identity with culture and religion especially in a new land. Furthermore, the disconnect between sexual and/or gender orientation with religion and culture, which can be problematic in one's own homeland, can cause even more emotional turmoil in a migration setting where the reminders of home and comfort zone, as well as culturally relevant social support are few. Fischer and DeBord (2007) argue that the conflict between religion and diverse sexual and gender identity is merely a thing perceived. Despite that, perception is difficult to change. A study by Haldeman (1996 in Beckstead and Israel 2007) that argues that sacrificing sexuality for cultural or religious identity may seem more practical if religion, for example, is the only source of solace who are without other sources of support; similarly, persons who have no other forms of privilege, such as White skin, wealth,

class, education, etc., “claiming a heterosexual orientation or living heterosexually may be the only source of privilege for some minority individuals (Bing, 2004)” (Beckstead & Israel, 2007: 223). Furthermore, in certain circumstances, claiming a sexual and/or gender identity that transgresses cultural norms can challenge other cultural values such as collectivism (Chan, 1997 in Beckstead & Israel, 2007). Beckstead and Israel (2007) argue, based upon the above considerations, that the role of service providers is not the assist a client to develop a sexual and/or gender identity – for indeed, these notions of sexuality and gender are not universal - but rather to be LGBTQ-affirming by discovering clients’ beliefs about religion and spirituality, the role that religion plays in their lives, what the relevant religious leaders’ attitudes are and how the client feels about them, etc. to assist in the determination of options and solutions (Beckstead & Israel, 2007: 232) such as referral to specifically LGBTQ-affirming religious and/or ethnic social clubs and groups. This is especially crucial in a migration setting in which many people hold on even more tightly to their cultural identity in the face of potential dilution by ‘Canadian culture.’

- **Discrimination contextualised**

Understanding the context of discrimination, such as violent attacks, is crucial to developing effective strategies to reduce the risk of occurrence/reoccurrence. Walters et al. (2001), in a study about social services for LGBTQ aboriginal Americans, noted that persons of colour and of LGBTQ identity are more likely to experience physical assault than persons who possess only one of those minority features, and that the assault is likely to be perpetrated by persons from more ‘mainstream’ identity categories. The interconnectedness of anti-gay violence and racial violence suggest the need to address the particular risk that racialised LGBTQ immigrants and migrants might be in when designing a settlement plan.

c) Intervention

A way to ensure that LGBTQ clients are well served, settlement agencies should model themselves after the kinds of agencies and services to which they would feel comfortable referring clients. Characteristics of LGBTQ-friendly organisations and positive space, other than visible symbols, include: sexual identity explicitly mentioned in anti-discrimination policy relevant to staff and client behaviour; LGBTQ staff and/or staff who are trained in LGBTQ-issues and the impact of sexual and gender identities on the migration and settlement experiences; outreaching in the LGBTQ community; programs and services especially tailored to LGBTQ newcomers; and a policy against the use of reparative or conversion therapies and against referring clients to other service providers who do support such processes (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004).

Settlement agencies would do well to also make all of their programs and services LGBTQ-inclusive, so as to not segregate LGBTQ clients from the other clients in case LGBTQ clients wish to interact and develop relationships with the others. Most importantly, however, it is important to note that a lot of research and policies neglect to address the issues and rights of trans-persons. Trans-persons do not have rights under codes such as the Ontario Human Rights Code, upon which some programs, such as the Ryerson Positive Space Ally (2006) program, are based. There is no reason, however, why settlement agencies cannot rise above the standards set by the Ontario Human Rights Code and others and include gender identity as unacceptable grounds for discrimination.

It is crucial that settlement agencies take a long and hard look at the implications of their policies and practices and tease out the underlying assumptions upon which they are based, and then to analyse the positive and negative impacts of these policies. The importance of analysing and improving policy is the primary recommendation of a number of researchers

and manuals about the creation of affirming space and services for LGBTQ clients (Maccio & Doueck, 2002; Ryerson Positive Space, 2006; van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004). The Ryerson Positive Space Ally training manual (2006) emphasises that even in organisations that strive to create and maintain equity and respect for all persons, it is not wise to assume that all levels and departments, etc. are free from discriminating practices and attitudes; as such, there is always room for improvement. The most effective policies are those that specify, as opposed to those that generalise (Maccio & Doueck, 2002; key informant M). Generalisations are contestable and provide a shaky foundation. Policies need to clarify that, for example, persons are allowed to identify their own sexual and gender identity (such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, two-spirited, or any other such term in any language), and that the rights to self-identify and the identity chosen - or identities chosen over time – are not grounds for discrimination. As discussed before, the cultural and linguistic challenges that compound in a multicultural setting need to be accounted for in the policy as well. Following the example of institutions such as Ryerson, which has an office of Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services, settlement agencies might do well to expressly create a group of board members and/or staff to address policy concerns, and to monitor and enforce anti-discriminatory practices. Experts in the field underline that enforcement mechanisms and consequences are an important part of policy (van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004; key informant M); they are critical because it sets the standard not only for behaviour, but, as van den Bergh and Crisp (2004) point out, define the process to redress grievances and consequences to be dealt.

Having at least one LGBTQ-identified staff member who is ‘out’ is ideal for settlement agencies; Maccio and Doueck (2002) recommend that human resource policies be invigorated to ensure that in the future, even greater diversity of staff will be striven for. Considering the

enormous challenge of the above and the amount of time and quality candidates needed for this kind of change, and that no minority person can be expected to be an expert on all issues related to their minority group or groups, settlement agencies need to take proactive steps to ensure that their existing staff is effectively trained about minority groups including LGBTQ newcomers; this training should be mandatory for all future staff as well as part of their initial training, considering that earlier is better (see Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004 for a discussion about the importance of anti-oppression training early in a social service provider's career, or in fact, before their career begins). Also, training is particularly relevant for individuals who have very little daily contact with LGBTQ persons in his or her personal life (Maccio & Doueck, 2002). Designed to "facilitate the adoption of new philosophies and approaches for human service staff working with gay and lesbian clients" (Maccio & Doueck, 2002: 70), effective training should include not only awareness-raising (Maccio & Doueck, 2002) but also service strategies, and dos and don'ts about service provider-client interactions, local resources, etc. In Toronto, the major player that provides LGBTQ-issue and service provision training is associated with the 'among friends' LGBTQ refugee support group housed at the 519 community centre on Church Street, the training project having sprung from the need for settlement workers to be more knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues' impact on migration and settlement identified by the 'among friends' support group coordinators and refugee resource guide developers. According to key informant M, OCASI also has in the past, and continues to provide occasional training about LGBTQ issues for settlement workers, and will improve their website so as to provide more straightforward access to resources for settlement workers, such as information about LGBTQ issues and experiences, on their website. While most literature about increasing the knowledge about, and sensitivity to, LGBTQ issues focuses on the front-line workers, it is important to recognise that persons in management and board executive

positions impact the overall attitude and practices in an organisation; everyone would benefit from all players' participation in anti-oppressive training that includes LGBTQ issues.

Outreach in the LGBTQ community will have a number of positive impacts. Most importantly, key informant M stresses that LGBTQ newcomers might educate themselves about where to find other LGBTQ persons in their place of destination, and arrive with little idea about where to seek settlement help. Key informant M argues that settlement information provided at the airport, for instance, is tailored to specific groups, not among which is the LGBTQ 'community.' As such, LGBTQ newcomers, most often refugees, show up at LGBTQ resource centres such as the 519 community centre and are disappointed to discover that not all of their needs can be met there. Key informant M informed that, incidentally, a couple of months before the publication of this report, a settlement worker from Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services Centre has started working out of the 519 community centre. While this is a vital step in meeting the needs of LGBTQ newcomers who are unsure of where else to go, or are afraid of mainstream service agencies, this one settlement worker alone cannot possibly meet the needs of all LGBTQ newcomers in Toronto. Not only could outreach into the LGBTQ community provide information about where settlement services are to be found - especially those closer to their places of residence, outreaching can also include the dissemination of crucial information such as refugee resources manuals developed by the 'among friends' refugee support group[6]as well as information about rights of newcomers to service. Key informant M points out that newcomers might not be able to identify discrimination against them if they are unaware of what they can expect. Besides being a way in which to participate in activism against heterosexism, which is recommended

[6] 'among friends' intends to launch a new, revised version of this resource manual autumn 2008.

by Syzmanski (2008), outreach is a crucial and primary step in bettering the whole settlement sector's service for LGBTQ clients.

Many settlement agencies in Toronto provide services and/or space for activities that go beyond the core settlement services funded by the government, such as ISAP, LINC and HOST. Recreational and support groups facilitated by settlement workers or peer-run are integral to successful integration of immigrants and refugees into existing co-ethnic groups and into the mainstream society. Often, groups and activities will be targeted to specific kinds of people, such as parents, youth, seniors, battered women, etc. It is very rare that there are any kinds of social, recreational and/or support groups for LGBTQ newcomers. Supposedly, they could participate in activities that address other aspects of their identities, but given that sexual and gender identity can impact the immigration and settlement process in a salient way, compounded with apprehension about potential discrimination from peers, this aspect of their identities needs to be recognised and addressed through the development of services that endeavour to support them as LGBTQ persons. Lepischak (2004) argues that both service support and community/social support are important, and that the focus of services and support for LGBTQ persons needs to widen its focus from AIDS to deal with the other life issues faced by LGBTQ persons; this is certainly important advice for service and program design for a settlement agency context.

The 'among friends' refugee support group that meets at the 519 community centre in Toronto is an excellent, and unfortunately rare example, of a support group designed to meet the multifaceted social and practical needs of LGBTQ newcomers to Toronto. The group and volunteers are coordinated by a settlement worker with youth at CultureLink. Volunteering and becoming trained as co-facilitators has enabled some members to gain enough credible Canadian experience and job skills to obtain meaningful employment, according to key

informant M; undoubtedly, participating as co-trainers with the affiliated 'among friends' project that trains settlement workers about LGBTQ issues will do the same. Furthermore, the letters of support provided by the group have provided vital proof in Immigrant and Refugee Board hearings about the sexual and/or gender identity of claimants who are fleeing persecution in their countries of residence because of sexual and gender identities. So far, key informant M highlights that of the eight claims that have been heard of group members, all of whom have received letters of support from 'among friends,' all eight have been accepted.

Settlement agencies will find useful information in Dyson et al.'s (2002) Family Service Association of Toronto manual for LGBTQ-support group facilitators. This manual does have a section about multiculturalism and the multifaceted nature of identity and oppression, however there is little indication of this in the body of the text. Nonetheless, the guide can serve as excellent foundation for the development of a support group for LGBTQ newcomers. Some things to consider when developing a support group for LGBTQ newcomers are immigration status, age, language, class, sex, gender, ability, religious and cultural perspectives, etc. Depending on the demographic of clients of each settlement agency, the nature of the discussions and activities, and logistics, the programs developed will differ. This can present quite a challenge in terms of inclusiveness as well as resources, should a number of different groups for different kinds of LGBTQ newcomers be desired. It is important to note that prior to 'among friends,' there was a peer-run support group for LGBTQ refugees that met at the 519, however it folded. Key informant M believes that the staff and resource support provided by the 519 for the 'among friends' project is vital to its success. As such, if settlement agencies plan to include a targeted program, service or group for LGBTQ clients, the allocation of resources and staff support should be included in the program design for maximum effectiveness and longevity. If resources, and/or the desire to create support

groups that highlight the impact of sexual and gender identity on the immigration and settlement experience do not exist, it is vital that the breadth of sexual and gender identities, types of families (such as same-sex), etc. be recognised in existing support groups and activities and that all programs and spaces are made safe for LGBTQ clients. While the impact of sexual and gender identity on immigration and settlement experiences needs to be recognised and mediated, the segregation of LGBTQ newcomers from other newcomers is not a positive step towards inclusion.

Also important is the building of a network of settlement and other social service agencies that provide services to LGBTQ newcomers that affirm all sexual and gender identities as well as races. Such a network will facilitate the referral process between member agencies, as well as raise the profile of the availability of such services so that there is a greater chance that settlement and other agencies who do not subscribe to LGBTQ affirmative practice, etc. and who have clients who would benefit from these services and atmospheres would at least know where to send them. Currently, there are so few agencies and organisations that are 'out' about their positive towards LGBTQ newcomer clients attitudes - such as CultureLink, Access Alliance MHCS, the 519, Family Service Association of Toronto, etc.; they cannot possibly shoulder the burden alone. Besides knowing where and to whom to refer clients, it is important to inform the referred service provider that the client being referred is LGBTQ, so long as the client is comfortable with this information being disclosed. Key informant M argues that one of the benefits of this is that not only does this allow the referred service provider to prepare relevant materials, etc. for the client, but also dissuades the referred service provider from discriminating against the client because the client is supported and that there are strong chances that claims of discrimination will be followed up and dealt with.

Needless to say, it important to refer LGBTQ clients to the most affirming services available and within reasonable distance, etc.

Assertions

Firstly, very little is likely to change in favour of LGBTQ newcomers and immigrants if funding sources do not keep settlement agencies accountable for strict adherence to Human Rights Codes in their entirety. Currently, the focus of accountability of the settlement sector to funders is an onerous burden (Richmonds & Shields, 2005), its focus on administrative accountability leaving little time or funds to support service planning, evaluation and improvements. Richmond and Shields (2005: 519) argue that strict administrative accountability is no "substitute for public accountability with respect to the goals and standards of publicly funded services" and seems to be simply a ruse to protect "the funding bureaucrats from allegations of scandal and to deflect public debate away from a consideration of government responsibility for effective settlement services." Instead of continuing down this problematic path, funding sources such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) need to focus accountability priorities on quality not quantity, and set the example for a coordinated multi-pronged assault on oppression by strictly enforcing that all minority groups need to be treated with equal dignity and respect as well as priority. Otherwise, pet issues will override others, leaving some people more marginalized than others. As such, it is important the funding sources like CIC take responsibility and champion the causes of the most marginalized to increase the visibility of their plight. Putting issues and groups on the radars of the settlement sector is not in itself sufficient; to ensure that more than just lip service will be paid, funding needs to be linked to demonstrated preparation of the settlement sector to serve marginalized communities such as LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers, as well as successful

implementation of appropriate services and the provision of relevant information and referrals to LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers. This would, of course, require that funding would be provided to ensure that sensitization training be widely available to the settlement sector as well as resources for the development of materials and networks, etc. Key informant C contends that it is far too easy to blame the front-line for not providing effective, appropriate and respectful service. Rather, it is necessary to look beyond the surface into the way priorities are made and the role of funding in this process. Settlement agencies are very busy places that deal with a host of issues and a diverse clientele and unless the requirement is linked with funding, there is no guarantee that the settlement sector will open its mind wider enough and diversify its priorities and resource base enough to serve the most marginalized and vulnerable.

If the settlement sector wants to be recognised as a professional sector, there needs to be a serious look at the way training is provided and the degree to which personal opinions and views are allowed to infiltrate the service provided to clients. There are a number of barriers to the professionalisation and standardisation of the settlement sector and services, among them that a chief factor that some people may be hired is because of their language capabilities, their religion, their culture and/or their personal experiences as an immigrant or newcomer to Canada in part because of the kind of organisation they are hired for as well as the nature and identities of the clientele. As discussed earlier, in Toronto alone, the diversity of the settlement sector is quite vast. Unfortunately, many of the characteristics that define settlement agencies are linked to high levels of homophobia. As such, the nature of the settlement sector and its general lack of regulation leaves it wide open for narrow minds and opinions, even if the people within the sector express the desire to help others. The taboo nature of public discussions of sexuality and same-sex activity that permeates many cultures including the mainstream Canadian culture makes for a situation in which the marginalisation of LGBTQ

persons to not be seen as the greatest of travesties and in which the marginalisation of LGBTQ persons is unlikely to be addressed. Nonetheless, as key informant C contends, the settlement sector is there to provide a service, not to impose beliefs and not allow disapproval of a way of life to interfere with the quality and the respectfulness of the services delivered. Especially when the funding is public, services provided to newcomers and immigrants should not reflect the preferences of the settlement workers but should reflect the needs of the client. As such, greater opportunity needs to be given to the client to define their needs as opposed to the service provider assuming that they know exactly what their client is experiencing and needing. Furthermore, the settlement sector as a whole needs to organise and inform itself about communities, networks and other resources in their communities that might better meet the needs of their clients than the more mainstream versions.

Avenues for further research

This paper touches upon a number of different issues that deserve a closer exploration; indeed, this paper is merely an introduction to a gap in research and practice. Efforts to mediate and eradicate homophobia and heterosexism in the settlement sector would benefit from a study that measures and illustrates homophobic and heterosexist attitudes in the settlement sector, and that compares this data against LGBTQ narratives of experiences with the settlement sector. Such a study could identify the degree and nature of homophobia and heterosexism in the settlement sector, which would serve to inform effective steps to eradicate oppression of LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers. A case-study of the application and evaluation of the suggestions made in this paper would also contribute valuable information to discourses about the transferability and validity of the culturally-competent practice model to LGBTQ inclusion as well as LGBTQ-affirming practices in multicultural settings.

More generally, the settlement sector would benefit from further inquest into the impact of funders' priorities and the nature of funding on the settlement sector and how this affects its ability to advocate for extra-marginalised groups and to adhere to Human Rights codes. Also, ripe topics for research and debate are the professionalization of the settlement sector, and the impact of cultural accommodation and religious tolerance on the adherence of the settlement sector to Human Rights codes and ideals and thus on the quality and nature of settlement services offered to newcomers and immigrants in Canada.

Conclusion

It is time for the settlement sector to stop thinking that LGBTQ identities are a North American phenomenon and to recognise that sexual and gender identities are factors that affect the settlement experience, especially when the identities fall into minority categories. Canada is known as a country that provides a safe haven to persons seeking refuge from their nations of origin because of feared persecution because of their sexual or gender identities. The settlement sector needs to realise, also, that some of their clients who come into Canada under other immigration categories might also have LGBTQ identities. It is easy for the settlement sector to ignore the issue, saying it doesn't exist simply because it is an uncomfortable topic, and to argue that there are too few LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers to warrant extra efforts to welcome them and provide relevant services and resources. Indeed, the belief that few LGBTQ persons exist is quite common, argues the Ryerson Positive Space program (2006), and that in fact the reason that numbers are believed to be so few is because they are silenced by disapproval. The settlement sector needs to recognise the role it plays in spreading heterosexist and homophobic messages that influence LGBTQ persons to keep quiet about their sexual and gender identities for fear of experiencing discrimination. Even spaces and

persons that consider themselves to be open-minded and inclusive can engender and uphold patterns of silence. Once the settlement sector makes a concerted effort to ensure that its spaces, staff, and foundational policies and procedures are LGBTQ-positive, no doubt the sector will see an increase in inquiries and demands for LGBTQ information and services.

While the loss of diversity and grassroots in the settlement sector because of funding inequalities is lamented by scholars like Richmond and Shields (2005), there needs to be recognition that the splintering of services into an infinite number of agencies for specific groups is not necessarily the best way to spend settlement dollars, the best way to foster notions of Canadian identity and acceptance of people different than the self, and certainly not the easiest environments in which to ensure that personal opinions and values are 'left at home' and that Human Rights Codes are adhered to in their entirety. Indeed, Canada's multicultural policy that supports accommodation, which is reflected by the specialized nature of many social services, should not be allowed to negatively impact the rights of all persons in Canada to live without discrimination because of parts of their identity such as sexuality or gender. In sectors like settlement, a balance needs to be struck between cultural accommodation and adherence to Human Rights for all.

This research paper identifies exclusion of LGBTQ issues and persons in settlement practice, and thus the need for the development and implementation of settlement services that meet the needs of LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers. These especially marginalized immigrants and newcomers receive a cool and minimal welcome and their service options in Toronto are limited to a very select few agencies that may only meet some, not all, of their needs, and may exacerbate identity conflicts. It is essential that the entire settlement sector step up and fulfill its Human Rights duties by providing a wider range of settlement agency

options to LGBTQ migrants through the integration of LGBTQ services into both mainstream and culturally specific settlement agencies.

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