



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION

# 2SLGBTQ+

## Insights Report



**BC TECH**  
association

# 15 Key Recommendations

## 1. Education and Resources

Training within the workplace about the unique challenges faced by sexually diverse and gender diverse individuals.

## 2. Address Assumptions

Create awareness about the harm of common assumptions that all people are straight or cis gender.

## 3. Safe Spaces

Establish Pride Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to build community within the organization.

## 4. Diversity Data

Capture meaningful data on gender with expanded categories, as well as separate data for sexual orientation.

## 5. Gender Disclosure Procedures

Formal procedure for disclosure of gender identity in the workplace.

## 6. Feedback Mechanisms

Transparent and widely communicated procedures to facilitate formal & informal feedback, taking consideration of subtle forms of discrimination.

## 7. Visibility

Explicit and formal support for employees who chose to disclose their sexual and gender identities within the workplace, especially from leadership.

## 8. Access to Programs and Facilities

Ensure programs and benefits are accessible to all employees and inclusive of 2SLGBTQ+ staff needs, along with more all-gender facilities.

## 9. 2SLGBTQ-specific Networking

2SLGBTQ-specific events to help build a larger community for employees in the industry.

## 10. Leadership Programs

Develop 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in management and leadership positions

## 11. Mentorship Programs

2SLGBTQ-specific mentorship programs connecting less experienced professionals to more established professionals.

## 12. Stories from 2SLGBTQ+ Leaders

Spotlight 2SLGBTQ+ leaders within the field who are comfortable to share their stories to create greater visibility and access to mentors.

## 13. Resources

Access to general resources for employers on 2SLGBTQ+ issues, especially for smaller companies.

## 14. 2SLGBTQ+ Causes

Show support and get involved with 2SLGBTQ+ causes and campaigns.

## 15. Intersectionality

Within broader EDI work, consideration should be made at intersections of 2SLGBTQ+ and other identities.

# Introduction

The **Discovery Foundation** is a charitable organization with a 50+ year history of supporting the development, sustainability, and resiliency of the science and technology sector in British Columbia. In partnership with our agents, we provide programming and research services with a particular focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. We are delighted to provide this report that provides important new insights on the 2SLGBTQ+ communities in the BC science and technology sector.

## Dr. David G. Harper

President & CEO | Discovery Foundation

**BC Tech** is a non-profit society dedicated to supporting BC's tech companies to grow and scale into the home-grown anchor companies of tomorrow. And the reality is, that can only be achieved with a diverse talent pool who is participating and in leadership roles within the tech industry.

The goal of this 2SLGBTQ+ Insights research project was to better understand the range of diverse experiences, needs, and interests specific to 2SLGBTQ+ members of the tech industry along with what employers are doing to support them.

We contracted TransFocus Consulting to conduct the research project which included consultation among Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (2SLGBTQ+) and Human Resources (HR) Practitioners within the tech industry in British Columbia (BC). This process was undertaken from March to May 2021 and engaged a total of 118 participants using a mixed methods approach of surveys and a roundtable discussion.

The report is divided into three main sections. First, there is an overview of the methods used to conduct the consultation process. This is followed by a summary of the key findings organized into five key themes. Finally, the third section outlines a total of 15 recommendations to address the findings from both 2SLGBTQ+ and HR practitioners.

Our hope is that this report will inform future action and initiatives throughout the tech ecosystem, and encourage greater funding for this important work, to build a more 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive tech sector for the future.

## Jill Tipping

President & CEO | BC Tech Association

We acknowledge that this report was prepared on the traditional, unceded territories of the Coast Peoples, including the lands of the Tsleil Waututh, Squamish, and Musqueam nations, where we are privileged to live, work and play.

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## 1. Executive Summary

**This project consulted with a total of 118 stakeholders, including 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry along with HR practitioners at tech companies in BC in order to determine unique and often invisible issues and experiences that hold these professionals back.**

This project consulted with a total of 118 stakeholders, including 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry along with HR practitioners at tech companies in BC in order to determine unique and often invisible issues and experiences that hold these professionals back. The outcomes from two surveys and one roundtable discussion were five key themes and 15 recommendations. The themes explored the cultural and structural areas where 2SLGBTQ+ professionals are unintentionally excluded and challenged. These consist of subtle forms of discrimination and hesitation sharing these issues and 2SLGBTQ+ status with HR, which are largely linked to a lack of knowledge and understanding of 2SLGBTQ+ issues among co-workers, limited practical and tangible changes (beyond policy), and limited uses of diversity data to better understand their unique issues.

To address these challenges, this report proposed eight recommendations for employers and seven for the tech industry more broadly. These recommendations provide greater opportunities for education to reduce assumptions and fill knowledge gaps, increased responsiveness through feedback, updates to programs and facilities, greater visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals, and talent development (especially for those early in and well into their careers).

In these ways, 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in tech can continue to make strong and innovative contributions to a growing industry in need of diverse perspectives, experiences, and insights to take the industry to the next level.

## 2. Methods

The consultation process used a mixed methods approach and consisted of two surveys and one roundtable discussion session conducted on April 15, 2021. Using these methods, a total of 118 participants were engaged. Table 2.1 summarizes the types of methods and number of participants involved in this process.

Group	Method	Number of Participants
2SLGBTQ+ Professional	Survey	41 Respondents
	Roundtable Discussion	16 Attendees
Human Resources Practitioners	Survey	61 Respondents
	<b>Total</b>	<b>118 Participants</b>

### 2.1 Surveys

Surveys with quantitative and qualitative questions were chosen as the primary research method, because it allows for anonymous information and a wider collection of the common experiences across the tech industry. Two surveys were conducted in order to gather perspectives from both 2SLGBTQ+ professionals as well as those in human resources roles at tech companies. Outreach for the survey was conducted via BC Tech, Discovery Foundation, and TransFocus social media channels, including posts on Twitter and LinkedIn. Additional recruitment support was provided by community partners, including Qmunity. Both surveys were open for two weeks from April 6 to 20, 2021.

The first survey consisted of 33 questions and was completed by 41 2SLGBTQ+ professionals. Most respondents work in the Lower Mainland (84%), and the remaining spread across Vancouver Island and Coast (11%), Thompson Okanagan (3%), and Kootenay (3%). Most of the

2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents identify as men (49%) with the remainder equally divided between women and non-binary respondents. In terms of sexual orientation, most respondents are gay or lesbian (49%) with another 43% identifying as bisexual, pansexual, or queer. There was also representation among those who are asexual (3%). One respondent identifies as Two-Spirit or Indigiqueer. The survey asked questions regarding the types of experiences faced, perceived levels of safety, interactions with Human Resources, and thoughts on programs or resources that they would like to see implemented by their employers and tech industry as a whole.

The second survey consisted of 28 questions and was completed by 61 human resource practitioners in tech. The majority of respondents work in the Lower Mainland (89%), followed by Vancouver Island and Coast (9%), and Thompson Okanagan (2%). About half of the HR practitioners (53%) are from companies with more than 200 employees

and more than a quarter (28%) from companies with 50 to 200 employees. The survey consisted of questions about involvement in cases pertaining to discrimination, current policies, programs, and systems relevant to 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion, and current plans in companies to address issues particular to sexual and gender diverse people in the tech industry.

Further details on survey demographics can be found in Appendix A (for 2SLGBTQ+ professionals) and Appendix B (for HR practitioners).



Photo: CC BY 3.0 US Mapbox Uncharted ERG

### 2.2 Roundtable Discussion

To supplement the findings of the surveys, a roundtable discussion was conducted with 2SLGBTQ+ professionals to facilitate deeper discussion of the issues and challenges they face. The roundtable took place on April 15, 2021 and was attended by 16 professionals from a range of diverse backgrounds including race, sexual orientations, gender identities, job experiences, and time in the tech industry.

The session began with an Indigenous land acknowledgement and description of the intent of the BC Tech and Discovery Foundation to gain a better understanding of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry. This was followed by a series of semi-guided questions to stimulate discussion among participants.

The questions were divided between sharing current experiences and challenges as well as ideas to improve and addressing issues at employer and industry levels.

Variation of these issues over time and different roles were also explored. Next, there were questions arising from nuances and insights found in the 2SLGBTQ+ survey results, including: Hesitation sharing discrimination with HR, the emotionally taxing nature of other people's assumptions, and trade-offs associated with disclosure of 2SLGBTQ+ identities. The session concluded with attendees sharing visions of what a completely 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive tech industry looks and feels like. A summary of the roundtable discussion can be found in Appendix C.

# 3. Findings and Results

Both the surveys and the roundtable discussion were analyzed for patterns and common themes of challenges faced by 2LGBTQ+ professionals, either in their personal experiences or within larger structures. From this analysis, five key themes were identified, including:

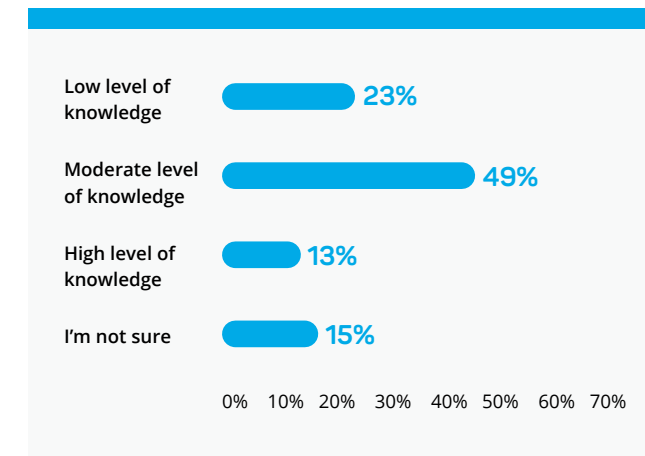
- Low to moderate levels of understanding of 2SLGBTQ+ issues
- High rates of subtle discrimination and discomfort with industry “bro culture”
- Gap between supportive policies and supportive practices on 2SLGBTQ+ issues
- Hesitation among 2SLGBTQ+ employees to approach HR to disclose identity or share needs
- Limited uses of employee data around sexual and gender diversity to inform EDI efforts

All results from the 2SLGBTQ+ and HR Practitioners surveys can be found in Appendix D and E, respectively.

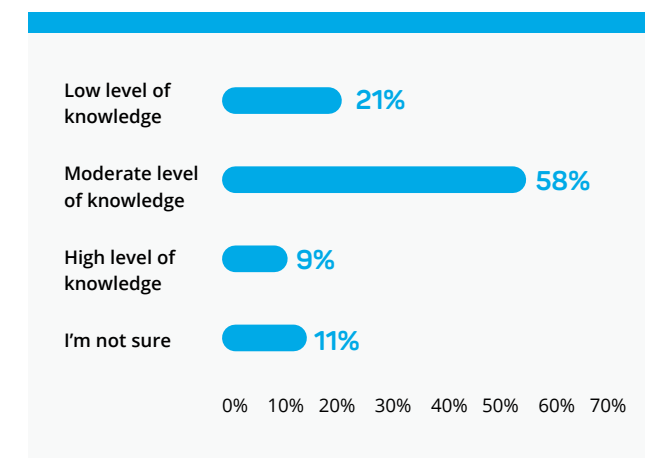
## Theme One LIMITED UNDERSTANDING

A key theme that surfaced in the HR practitioner survey and further substantiated in the roundtable discussion was a general lack of understanding among employees about issues facing 2LGBTQ+ professionals within organizations. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 summarize the average levels of knowledge among employees on the topics of sexual and gender diversity, respectively.

**FIGURE 3.1**  
Knowledge about Sexual Diversity



**FIGURE 3.2**  
Knowledge about Gender Diversity



“The challenges come with folks *not having enough information* to know that their actions would not be inclusive for gender variant folks. There have been instances of incorrect pronoun usage at a leadership level.”

HR Practitioner Survey Respondent

Over one-fifth of respondents indicated that employees within the company had low levels of knowledge on these topics, with only around 10% reporting companies as having high levels of knowledge. Qualitative results from the HR survey underscored that the lack of understanding was a common cause of incidents involving 2SLGBTQ+ employees, especially among “older, white cisgender male colleagues” or those with more traditional and religious backgrounds. This is the case for both issues of sexual and gender diversity.

This lack of understanding has potential impacts on 2SLGBTQ+ employees feeling excluded and unwelcomed. Some 2SLGBTQ+ respondents reported feeling as though they “have to be the one to educate those around [them].” This finding is also reflected in the discussion as part of the roundtable, wherein respondents described added discomfort within larger social situations (e.g., company parties with partners), or reported instances of feeling stereotyped based on their identity. One roundtable attendee stated that co-workers typecast him as the “creative one,” based solely on his queer identity, without being able to see or recognize any of his other assets and strengths.

“One employee was transitioning, and their manager did not know how to handle the situation. The manager held a presentation to the team to announce the news without *letting the employee know*.”

HR Practitioner Survey Respondent

## Theme Two

### SUBTLE DISCRIMINATION

Another key result from the consultation process among both 2SLGBTQ+ and HR participants is the pernicious nature of subtle forms of discrimination, despite feeling relatively safe. When asked about levels of safety, most 2SLGBTQ+ respondents (86%) reported feeling some level of safety at their workplaces, with only 5% reporting that they felt somewhat unsafe. Despite majority of respondents feeling safe, 59% reported that they faced some form of subtle discrimination at work, with an additional 2% reporting overt forms of discrimination. Figure 3.3 depicts the types of discrimination 2SLGBTQ+ employees face. In comparison, HR practitioners report being aware of or involved in higher levels of overt discrimination (17%) and lower levels of subtle forms (39%) compared to what 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents shared. This speaks to companies being set-up to receive challenges requiring formal response and reprimand; however, less suited to address subtle issues.

However, the subtle challenges, when left unaddressed, may eventually accumulate or grow into overt issues, which are costly and difficult to address. It is easier to address issues when they are smaller in scale. This speaks to the importance and value of anonymous ways of providing feedback about daily, persistent challenges, which is addressed in the recommendations.

"I am not 100% out, but one day, one of the leadership made a slight joke about me, he's assuming I was gay, and they laughed. Even though I try to be stoic, I can still feel pain. I felt it, but learned to ignore it."

2SLGBTQ+ Survey Respondent

The most common form of discrimination reported by 2SLGBTQ+ respondents is differential treatment (35%). This was echoed in the 2SLGBTQ+ roundtable discussion, in which attendees shared that there was "surface level support," but it did not translate to inter-personal interactions with co-workers, which were exclusionary. Another common experience among 2SLGBTQ+ respondents is intentional misgendering, which disproportionately affects trans and gender diverse employees at higher rates. Additionally, more than half of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents selected "other," with common themes around inappropriate jokes, invasive questions, assumptions about gender expression and sexual orientation, as well as microaggressions. A key driver of this theme is related to Theme 1, namely a general lack of knowledge about 2SLGBTQ+ issues.

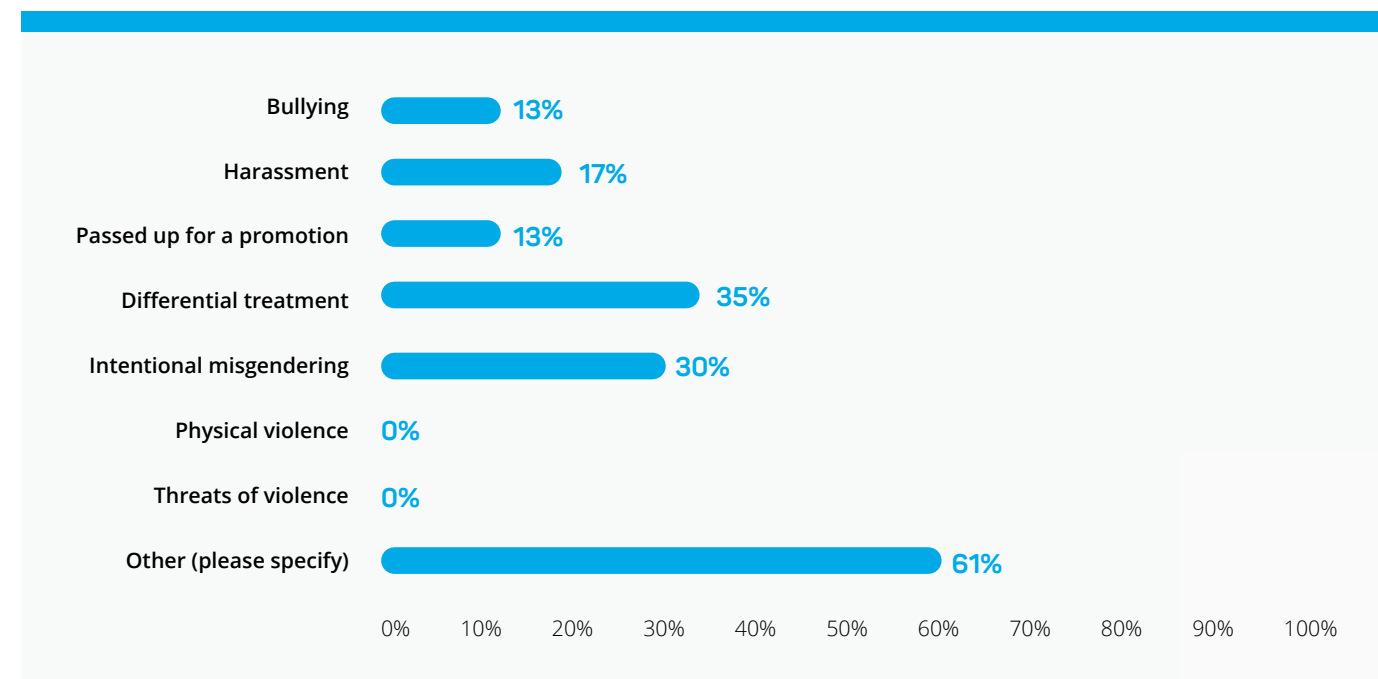
"Using inappropriate language when address someone...ex: 'You know Mike...the gay guy on the team.'"

HR Practitioner Survey Respondent

Based on qualitative responses to challenges specific to the tech industry, a very common theme that arises is a discomfort regarding the highly masculine "bro culture" that is prevalent in the industry, especially for women respondents. Combined with the lack of understanding from Theme 1, multiple respondents spoke about their experience with homophobic and transphobic jokes and exclusionary language leading to feeling unwelcomed, especially when the jokes and comments came from leadership and management.

As part of the roundtable discussion, similar feelings were expressed by several attendees. This is especially true of many women attendees, who spoke about how their gender identity played a key part in their experiences of bullying and harassment in the workplace. One trans woman roundtable attendee shared that how she was treated improved when she began appearing more heteronormative, and often faced uncomfortable questions during her transition. She also reflected that as a woman, she is often "not taken seriously" or needs to repeat things that she says, an experience that she had not had before transitioning.

**TABLE 3.3**  
Types of Discrimination Reported by 2SLGBTQ+ Professional



# Theme Three

## HESITATION TO SHARE WITH HR



"I can't report someone who is reacting badly because we're a small team who is highly qualified - if they have to be replaced, we won't meet requirements (which affects our funding/clients paying us) and I could lose my job or have to work longer hours I can't afford to do."

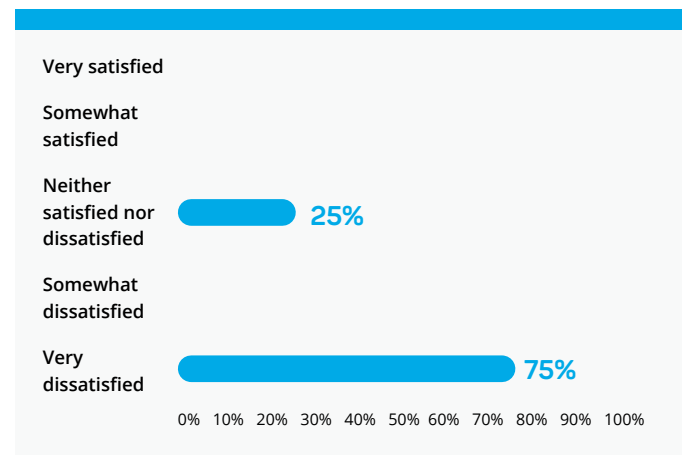
2SLGBTQ+ Survey Respondent

Another key result of the consultation efforts is the hesitation that 2SLGBTQ+ professionals express in approaching HR about their identities and their needs, especially those related to experiences of subtle discrimination discussed in Theme 2. This is largely attributable to the longstanding and continuing stigma associated with these identities as well as lack of visibility and familiarity.

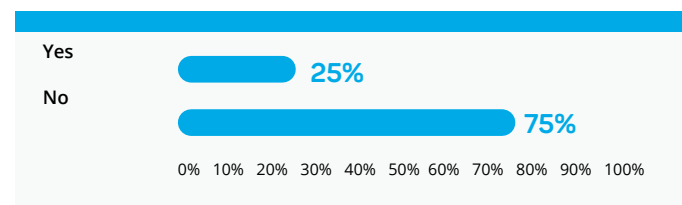
In particular, among the 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents who face discrimination, 83% shared that they do not report these instances to HR (Figure 3.5). Of the small percentage who report to HR, 75% are "very dissatisfied" with the outcome (Figure D6).

When asked why respondents did not report discrimination Figure 3.5 Reporting Discrimination to Human Resources, results varied between those who faced discrimination from fellow employees versus from clients.

**FIGURE D6**  
Human Resources



**FIGURE 3.5**  
Reporting Discrimination to Human Resources



"The lack of visibility, the lack of understanding about the B in LGBT, the intersection of being Black, a woman AND in the LGBTQ community is a lot to deal with so it's just easier to not visibly sit at an additional intersection."

2SLGBTQ+ Survey Respondent

For those facing issues internally, a range of responses were reported from feeling uncomfortable to disclose 2SLGBTQ+ status, issues of power imbalance between the offender, feeling that HR was not open to their experiences, wanting to fit in, and feeling that the incidents were too subtle to warrant reporting. These last responses commonly indicate that they felt it was more effective to be educational, and try to "work on the relationships." Within the roundtable discussion, one attendee raised the issue of transparency. Because HR rarely shares with employees the number of cases being raised or on the outcomes of the cases, 2SLGBTQ+ participants find it difficult to trust that HR will take their concerns seriously or anticipate what will be done to address their issues.

HR practitioners were asked to share their experiences addressing discrimination involving sexual and gender diversity. They highlighted their struggles with addressing subtle forms of discrimination. These include not hearing about the issues and a lack of education and tools to respond to the nuanced issues.

In addition to the lack of support 2SLGBTQ+ participants experience from HR on issues of discrimination, there is

hesitation among many respondents to disclose their 2SLGBTQ+ status. A roundtable attendee reflected on the challenges of leading a "double life." While they are envious of those who are out, there is a financial need to remain hidden which outweighs the benefits of being out. This lack of visibility to speak openly about 2SLGBTQ+ experiences, results in many respondents choosing to remain "invisible" as to not draw attention to themselves. More specifically, there is a lack of visibility and representation in management and those in leadership positions. This is in contrast to other respondents who reported that they have visible representation in leadership at their organization, which has a positive impact on their experiences in the workplace. One tech leader shared that many in their company have described it as "inspiring" to have someone in leadership open with their identity.

"Can be challenging to catch and address microaggressions which aren't visible to the HR team, since we're not present for most of those interactions. Leaves responsibility to be the responsibility of the person experiencing them to report them, which isn't fair and also really rises the stress levels of those folks."

HR Practitioner Survey Respondent

# Theme Four

## GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

Another key finding of this research is the current gap between policy and practices related to tangible changes to company culture and structures across the tech industry. This is evident in the higher numbers of policies that include references to gender and sexual diversity at tech companies coupled with lower levels of education and actions on these topics. As such, policies may not be translating to the on-the-ground reality. Some of the plans that HR practitioners report in the survey could address this gap; however, more concerted effort is likely needed.

More specifically, HR practitioners report their companies currently undertaking the following measures in the workplace, which are primarily focused on broader EDI efforts and goals with a few measures focused specifically on 2SLGBTQ+ employees and issues



HR survey respondents report their companies having higher rates of supportive policies that specifically reference sexual and gender diversity (63% and 54%, respectively). However, less than half of HR practitioners reported their companies providing training related to sexual and gender diversity (37% and 41%, respectively). A high percentage reported the absence of such training (50% and 39% respectively), with the remaining (11% and 20%) being unsure. This difference between lower levels of education and higher levels of 2SLGBTQ+ supportive policies speak to the gaps between aspirational aspects and practical realities of EDI initiatives at tech companies in BC as it pertains to 2SLGBTQ+ employees.

Figure E13: Summary of Plans to Implement Measures to Address 2SLGBTQ+ Issues depicts the types of initiatives that HR practitioners and organizations are planning to implement. Even the most frequently-selected plans of allowing space to provide pronouns and sharing lived experiences are reported by half of respondents. Less than half of HR respondents report plans for training or support for 2SLGBTQ+ employees along with 21% indicating that their organizations have no plans to date. While these are important measures to put in place, they will likely not suffice to address the full set of challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry.

**FIGURE E13**  
Summary of Plans to Implement Measures to Address 2SLGBTQ+ Issues

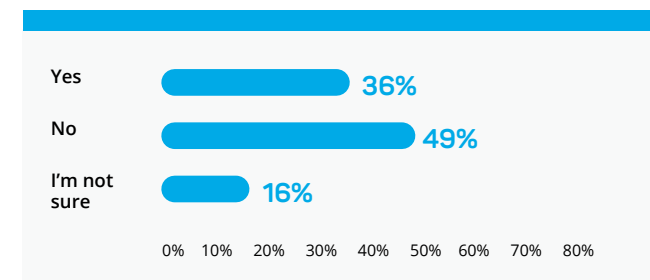
- Hiring new EDI position
- Establishing EDI committees and councils
- Creating EDI accountability measures
- Developing EDI resources on webpage, including 2SLGBTQ+ issues
- Conducting employee engagement surveys on EDI issues
- Establishing and supporting Employee Resource Groups
- Updating Employee Handbooks
- Updating employee records (e.g., fields for pronouns and chosen name)
- Creating gender-inclusive and adoption-friendly parental leave
- Participating in Pride
- Hosting Guest Speakers and Lunch n' Learns on 2SLGBTQ+ topics

# Theme Five

## LACK OF DIVERSITY

The last key result that the consultation process surfaced was the absence of data on sexual and gender diversity to help inform EDI strategies at tech companies. In particular, 36% of HR practitioners reported that their company collects employee census data that includes sexual diversity, with 43% collecting information on gender diversity. In both cases, an additional 16% were not sure (Figures 3.6 and 3.7). The slightly lower rate of collecting data on sexual diversity compared to gender diversity speaks to ongoing hesitation or common misconception that it is not appropriate or relevant to collecting these data. However, without this information, it is difficult for companies to 1) understand the unique challenges and vulnerabilities, 2) identify meaningful mitigation, and 3) track improvements in EDI over time within organizations on 2SLGBTQ+ issues.

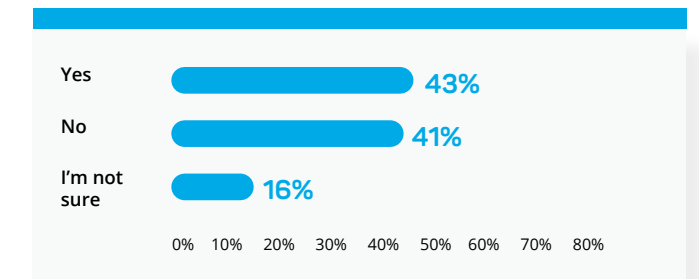
**FIGURE 3.6**  
Sexual Diversity Data



Of the HR practitioners who reported that their companies collect these data, the most common methods for sexual diversity data collection were in annual engagement surveys that are usually anonymous and voluntary to complete. For gender diversity, it is more common to see information collection during the onboarding process in the form of questions about gender identity and/or pronouns.

The ways these data are collected and used vary considerably across companies. Some companies collect sexual and gender diversity together by asking: "Are you a part of the LGBTQ community?" Others collect sexual and gender diversity separately with expanded lists of response options for each, often with a fill-in-the-blank for those whose identities are not

**FIGURE 3.7**  
Gender Diversity Data



captured in the categories. Only a handful of respondents collect gender in the binary. Some categories listed under the gender question are not genders (e.g., "intersex" and "trans" - which is not itself a gender, but rather a qualifier). Most companies collect these data internally and one respondent referenced using a third-party data vendor. Some companies are in the practice of using diversity data to drive meaningful changes for the purpose of greater EDI (including addressing pay gaps); however, many are not or just beginning to apply these data.

This finding is echoed by some of the responses in the 2SLGBTQ+ survey and roundtable discussion. Multiple respondents indicated that they would like to see more information from the tech industry on levels of 2SLGBTQ+ representation within the industry. Roundtable attendees noted the absence of information about 2SLGBTQ+ identities in contrast to what tech companies are doing to identify, track, and address the lack of representation of women in the tech industry. This point speaks to a frequently expressed idea among many respondents that EDI initiatives towards 2SLGBTQ+ employees generally lag behind larger efforts for inclusion within organizations and the tech industry.

"Data collected from our annual inclusion survey in general has led to: the featuring of diverse employees on our company blog, the launch of diversity & inclusion training for hiring managers and interviewers and the creation of a [EDI] council."

HR Practitioner Survey Respondent

## 4. Recommendations

**In order to address the challenges discussed in the preceding sections, a total of 15 recommendations are proposed. These are described in more detail in the sections that follow.**

A common theme in the results between the two surveys is that the interest in solutions is greater among 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents than there are plans reported by HR practitioners in companies to address. This reflects an ongoing disconnect between needs and responses within companies.

For more details on solutions of interest, please refer to Figure D8 in Appendix D on the desires among 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents from employers and Figure E7 in Appendix E for the needs of HR practitioners to better support 2SLGBTQ+ employees.

### 1. Education and Resources

Providing voluntary and strongly encouraged training about the unique challenges faced by sexually diverse and gender diverse individuals is an effective way to build understanding among co-workers within companies. Education can be provided as part of employee onboarding, or within the scope of broader inclusion efforts.

Special considerations should be made not to over-generalize the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+, particularly due to the diverse challenges faced by LGB as compared to trans and gender diverse individuals. There are additional complexities stemming from intersectional identities related to race, gender, indigeneity, or accessibility status. It is also recommended that education provided is realistically applicable to the specific challenges and environments within organizations and the tech industry overall.

Specific to the needs of HR practitioners to be able to better support 2SLGBTQ+ employees, HR survey respondents expressed an interest in brief-how to guides (76%) as well as live education sessions tailored to their role (72%). There is a desire to understand the issues and challenges 2SLGBTQ+ employees face along with what HR and companies can do to address them. To a lesser extent, there was also interest among HR respondents in other resources, including for panel discussions and podcasts (57%), case studies with statistics and stories (50%), and watching an in-depth explainer video (50%).

## 2. Address Assumptions

From the results of the 2SLGBTQ+ survey, the top most requested change from employers is addressing assumptions in the workplace. In particular, the most selected cultural change at companies among 74% of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents is assumptions related to sexual orientation (e.g., assuming the gender of employees' partners). The second most requested measure among 66% of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents was reducing assumptions related to gender identity (e.g., assuming someone's gender and/or pronouns based on their gender expression, names, or features). However, less than half of HR survey respondents report that there are plans to address this in their companies. There are slightly fewer companies that are planning to address assumptions related to sexual diversity (40%) as compared to gender diversity (50%). This may be tied to the misconception that LGB issues have been largely addressed, which recent research underscores is not the case ([CCDI 2018](#), [Pride at Work 2019](#), and [McKinsey 2020](#)).

The reoccurring assumptions that everyone is either heterosexual and/or cisgender puts 2SLGBTQ+ employees in precarious positions of having to engage in complex, real-time trade-offs of whether to correct the assumptions, largely based on an assessment of safety. While seemingly innocuous assumptions, the persistent and widespread invisibility of 2SLGBTQ+ people can have lasting impacts on their mental health, performance, and wellbeing. Despite substantial progress over the last decade, undoing the harm of long-term stigmatization takes time and is circuitous.

One way to unpack the challenges and complexities related to assumptions is to support self-reflection among non-2SLGBTQ+ employees that bridges to navigation of their own persistent, incorrect assumptions from others (e.g., age, height, accent, gender, and skin tones).

Another method of addressing assumptions is to normalize and encourage the voluntary sharing of pronouns among any employee rather than only with trans and gender diverse individuals. This can be done through verbal sharing during introduction, during events with a pronoun field on name cards, and on personal information records, such as email signatures or slack profiles.

One important thing to take note when encouraging pronouns is to consider the larger climate of support towards trans and gender diverse individuals within an organization. Pronoun sharing can be effective in cultures where trans and gender diverse are actively supported, but may result in backlash if incorporated into less supportive cultures. This may necessitate a robust communications plan to support understanding and adoption among non-2SLGBTQ+ employees.

### 3. Safe Spaces

There is an interest among 2SLGBTQ+ employees for Pride Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), where they are able to build community with other members in the organization. This provides other opportunities for all employees to share personal experiences and can improve feelings of safety and inclusion for those in the organization. This measure was of interest to 55% of the 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents.

## 4. Diversity Data

While many HR practitioners report their companies collecting diversity data on gender and sexual orientation, it is recommended that they compile the numbers and experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ employees, especially related to levels of safety and belonging. Furthermore, these need to be reported on an annual basis, so 2SLGBTQ+ employees can see that they were counted and what came of their voluntary self-disclosure. Based on the results in the 2SLGBTQ+ survey, 2SLGBTQ+ data collection and use are of interest among 50% of respondents.

For the companies that are planning to collect these data (reported by 31% of HR respondents), they need to link the collection to rationale for collecting data related to sexual and gender diversity (i.e., to identify and address their unique issues and needs).

It is strongly recommended that data for sexual diversity be collected separately from gender diversity. The latter is best covered in the existing gender question with expanded response options. And another question may need to be created to collect sexual orientation data, if it does not already exist. It is important that this information be voluntary self-identification to avoid putting pressure on employees who may not be comfortable sharing.

Furthermore, it is recommended to avoid certain features, such as check-all-that-apply or fill-in-the-blank that present ethical considerations at the backend during data analysis ([BCCAT 2017](#)). The fewer the numbers of response options for both sexual orientation and gender questions, the more powerful the statistical analyses and concrete the actions for greater inclusion.

The onboarding process is an important opportunity to allow new hires to indicate information regarding their diverse identities, including being 2SLGBTQ+. For existing

## 5. Gender Disclosure Procedures

Ensuring there is a formal procedure for disclosure of gender identity and gender transition is critical for the inclusion of trans and gender diverse employees. This is desired by 37% among 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents. However, HR practitioners report at a lower level (19%) that their companies have plans to introduce these types of procedures. This may be tied to companies already having such procedures in place, or they may not be aware that this is an inclusive practice of importance to 2SLGBTQ+ employees, especially those who are trans and gender diverse.

These procedures need to emphasize the support that individuals have and steps that will be taken to ensure a smooth transition within the organization. Often, 2SLGBTQ+ applicants interested in working at companies will look for the presence of disclosure procedures, even if they do not personally need them - it demonstrates that companies have progressive and inclusive practices.

"I hate being the only they/them and that being brought up as a topic of discussion or me suddenly being the person to ask about gender and all 2SLGBTQ+ questions. [It] flags me as [gender diverse] with everyone I interact with...It's not inclusive to ask us to out ourselves in situations with power imbalances (eg with my employer)... or with those who may need some education on subject matters."

2SLGBTQ+ Survey Respondent

## 6. Feedback Mechanisms

Given the high levels of reported subtle discrimination surfaced in the consultation process, HR departments should be prepared to speak to these issues and experiences, especially jokes and misgendering. Furthermore, beyond formal complaints processes, employers in the tech industry should establish transparent and widely-communicated procedures on how these issues may be addressed in informal ways that account for the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ employees.

This could also entail establishing anonymous feedback mechanisms through 1-800 numbers or mobile-based apps that allow employees to submit issues or recommendations that others can see and upvote. These methods are commonly used in the tech industry for customer-facing issues and scaling of products, but are not as often seen for the benefits they could provide to employees, especially those of equity-seeking groups including 2SLGBTQ+ employees, who may feel uncomfortable or unsure about coming forward in a formal manner.

## 7. Visibility

Though individuals should not be pressured to be out, companies should ensure that there is explicit and formal support for employees who chose to disclose their sexual and gender identities within the workplace, especially from leadership in the organization. This can come in the form of verbal and written statements. Developed with 2SLGBTQ+ employees.

It is especially powerful if there are leaders or prominent individuals who are part of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities and willing to be visible and share their experiences within the company. This echoes a larger theme within EDI work more generally about being more deliberate to identify and mentor individuals from marginalized groups who are often overlooked for opportunities of development and promotion in organizations.

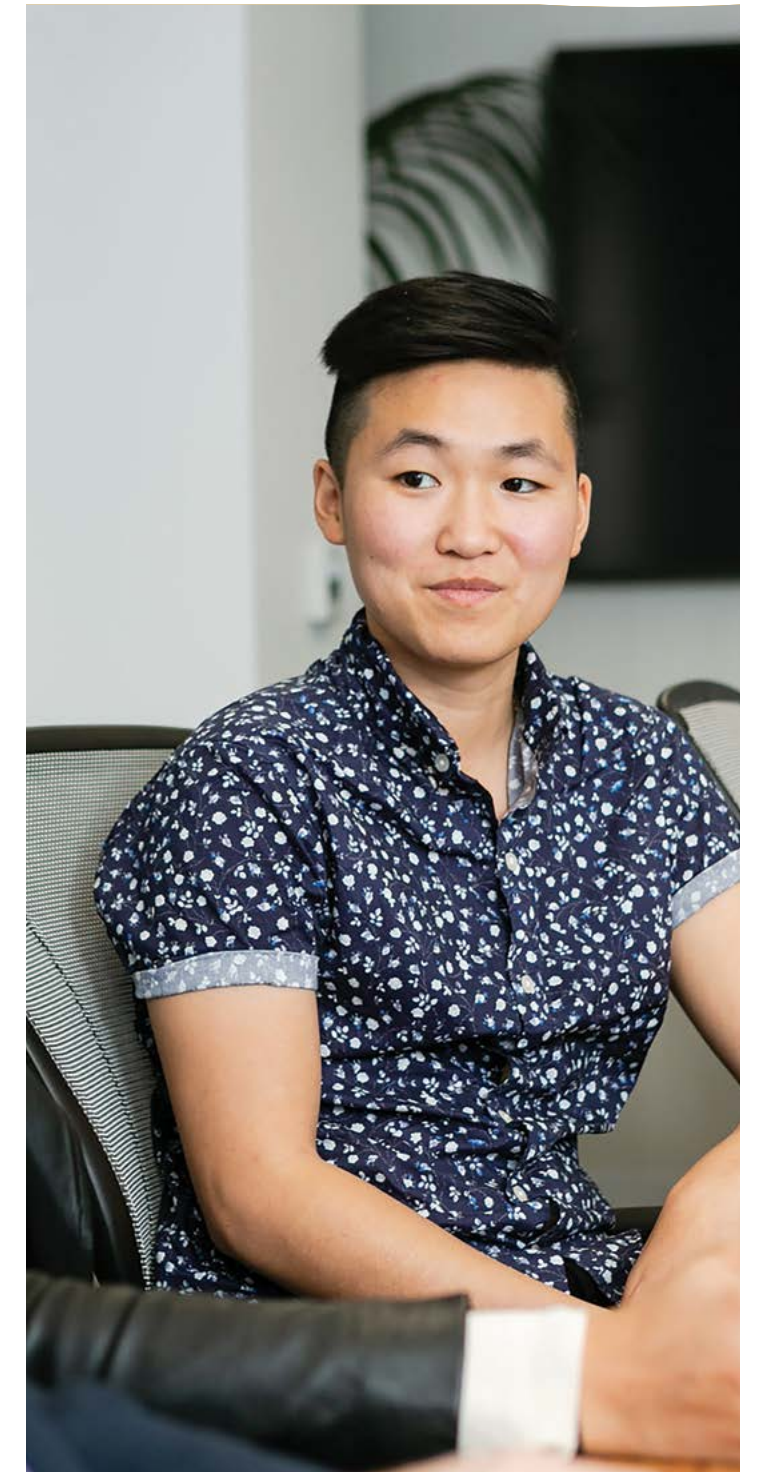


Photo: CC BY 3.0 US Mapbox Uncharted ERG

## 8. Access to Programs and Facilities

Companies should look to ensure that their programs and benefits are accessible to all employees. Often 2SLGBTQ+ people are overlooked during the development of facilities, programs, or employee services. Examples of this may include challenges accessing healthcare, insufficient options for washrooms, gendered assumptions of parental leave, and/or gender-based events and opportunities.



Companies should check that employee benefits do not have conditions pertaining to gender (e.g., pregnancy leave only offered to women), that there are adequate numbers of all-gender washrooms and change rooms, as well as support for individuals to use facilities that align with their gender identity. Gender-based programs or opportunities within companies should also be inclusive of gender diversity and allow for individuals to self-determine if it is valuable to them.

Regarding healthcare and employee wellbeing, companies should request extended health insurance vendors to provide access to gender-affirming procedures not covered by provincial health plans, which is of interest to 47% of 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents. However, HR practitioners reported a much lower rate (7%) of plans within their companies to introduce this measure. Employers should also avoid situations in which individuals are excluded from important health coverage due to pre-existing conditions (e.g., HIV).

This support can also be extended for mental health services, where it is important that employees are able to access professional help that is applicable for their individual needs regarding sexual, gender, and/or other marginalised identities held. This may necessitate vetting of therapists as part of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to determine if they are 2SLGBTQ+-competent.

Figure D8 in Appendix D provides details from 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents about desired changes across the BC Tech ecosystem, specifically conference and event organizations, post secondary institutions and training bodies, government agencies, funding bodies, and not-for-profits.

## 9. 2SLGBTQ-specific Networking

Organizations should look to create 2SLGBTQ-specific events to help build a larger community for employees in the industry. This option was of greatest interest among 84% of 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents. Networking can be facilitated at events, panels, or advisory boards on 2SLGBTQ+ issues. Among half of 2SLGBTQ+ survey respondents (55%), there is an interest in seeing 2SLGBTQ+ issues included and discussed as part of annual tech conferences.

Multiple respondents made reference to specific meetups or hackathons that would be a fun way to engage with other members of the tech community. Additionally, this would increase the level of visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ people in the industry overall, helping to create a more welcoming environment for new talents to explore, network, and learn from more experienced 2SLGBTQ+ professionals.

## 10. Leadership Programs

Furthermore, the 2SLGBTQ+ survey revealed a substantial interest in leadership programs to develop 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in management and leadership positions at tech companies. These types of leadership programs could be developed and delivered by post-secondary institutions. This recommendation is an important approach to strengthening the pipeline of 2SLGBTQ+ employees in the tech industry. Leadership programs were the second most selected option in the survey with 74% of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents interested in this option.

There are good models for developing and undertaking such leadership programs. In particular, Pride at Work Canada recently conducted Thrive ([Pride at Work 2021](#)) for 2SLGBTQ+ leaders across various industries. In the United States, there are more examples of developing 2SLGBTQ+ leaders at the Stanford Executive Program ([Financial Times 2018](#)).

## 11. Mentorship Programs

Employers in the ecosystem should also look to establish 2SLGBTQ-specific mentorship programs connecting less experienced professionals to more established professionals in the tech industry. For many younger 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, it can be challenging to find role models with lived experiences that can walk them through strategies for navigating complex workplace issues. This would provide individuals with greater feelings of support and recognition from prospective candidates interested in the industry.

This can also help the wider industry of tech in BC to build more robust pipelines for talent from diverse applicant pools. There are further opportunities here to include options for students looking to pursue careers in the industry.

## 12. Stories from 2SLGBTQ+ Leaders

Conference and event organizers should look to spotlight 2SLGBTQ+ leaders within the field who are comfortable to share their stories. A lack of visibility was a common issue of the industry, cited by many survey respondents as well as roundtable attendees. Visible role models in the industry would provide a strong signal 2SLGBTQ+ professionals about the commitment of the industry to further 2SLGBTQ+ interests and empower commonly marginalized voices. These individuals could speak at events specific to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, as well as conferences dedicated to issues in tech overall. In fact, spotlighting these leaders within a wider industry context would be powerful in drawing awareness and creating a dialogue with the industry as a whole.

As a point of consideration, there still needs to be recognition of the personal risk and vulnerability that is tied to visibility, including those in higher status positions. Some 2SLGBTQ+ leaders in the survey and roundtable discussions shared the challenges of being out, including disruption to relationships with clients and added scrutiny in the industry. Conference and event organizers should take care to support these individuals and look to ways that these risks may be mitigated.

## 13. Resources

Many survey respondents and some roundtable attendees, who work for smaller organizations, share that there are a lack of resources available for educating employees on 2SLGBTQ+ issues. Similar to the BC Tech #WhatWorks publication with actionable strategies to advance [women in tech](#), other organizations and employers in the ecosystem could create a collection of resources and best practices that can be used by tech companies who may not be able to engage in these areas on their own, especially smaller organizations with limited resources. We hope that this report itself will provide an essential baseline of #WhatWorks actionable strategies on 2SLGBTQ+ issues which can be built on in future.

## 14. 2SLGBTQ+ Causes

As part of demonstrating support for issues facing 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, tech companies should look for opportunities to support and get involved with 2SLGBTQ+ causes. This includes participating in annual events, such as Pride celebrations in the summer, Trans Day of Remembrance in November, and Trans Day of Visibility in March across BC. Tech companies could also support organizations that address issues faced by 2SLGBTQ+ people through volunteer hours and/or financial contributions. The tech industry in BC could also lend their voice to support social and legal developments that look to further the causes of equity within the province.

## 15. Intersectionality

Within broader EDI work, consideration should be made for intersections of various identities. Understanding this, strategies can be developed in ways that allow for collaboration across various EDI initiatives. This may involve inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ speakers at women's events, being explicitly supportive of gender diversity in women's programs and services. This could also entail creating more robust systems of information so that benchmarks of the industry can more accurately reflect the experiences of people across multiple identity factors (e.g., race, gender identity, indigeneity, disability status, and age).

Not only does this serve to strengthen and leverage existing efforts, it increases the solidarity felt across equity-seeking groups. This further amplifies allyship from individuals within organizations and across the industry as a whole. It produces a snowball effect where EDI initiatives are able to grow faster and build on ideas and resources created by each other.

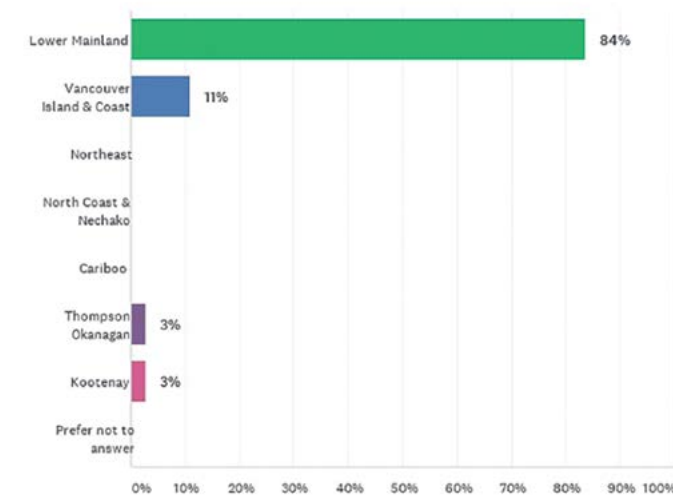


# Appendices

## Appendix A

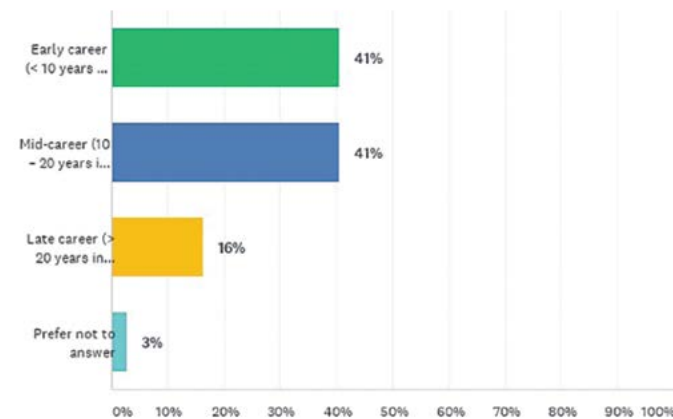
### Demographic and Background Information of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents

Figure A1. Locations of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=37)



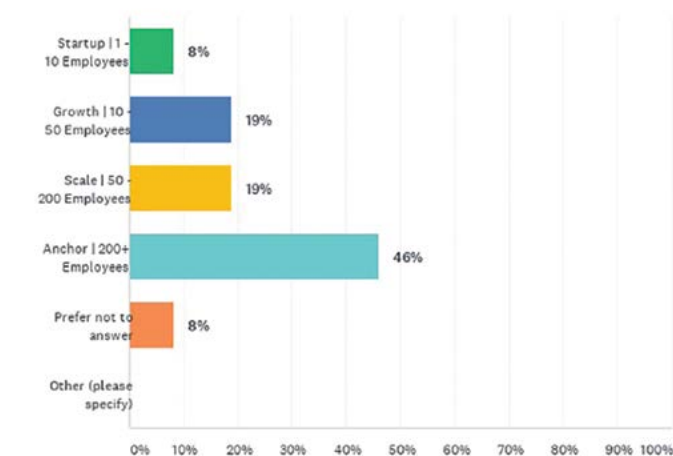
Respondents were asked which region they live and work in. Most respondents live and work in the Lower Mainland (84%). Some respondents live and work from Vancouver Island & Coast (11%) and very few from Thompson Okanagan (3%) and Kootenay (3%). No respondents live and work from Northeast, North Coast & Nechako or Cariboo.

Figure A2. Stage of Career of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=37)



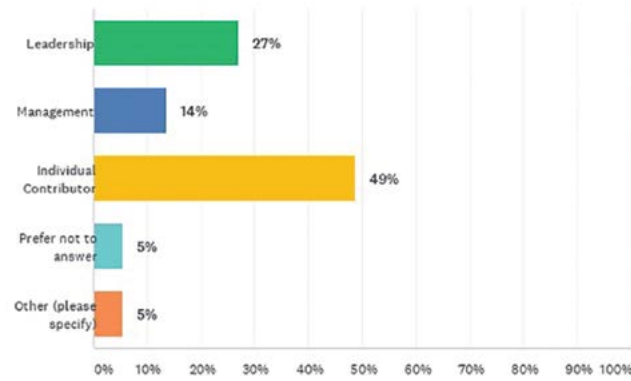
Respondents were asked which stage of their career in tech they are at. Most respondents are in their early to mid career (82%), half of which are below 10 years and the other half between 10 and 20 years. Few respondents are in their late career (16%) and very few prefer not to answer (3%).

Figure A3. Size of Companies where 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents Work (N=37)



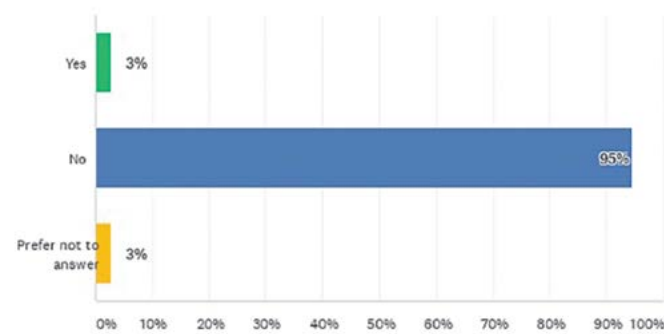
Respondents were asked about the size of the company they work at. Most respondents work in an Anchor type company (46%). About a fifth works in a Scale type company (19%) and another fifth in a Growth type of company (19%). Few respondents work in a Startup (8%).

**Figure A4. Levels within Company of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=37)**



Respondents were asked about their level within the organization. Most respondents work as individual contributors (49%). One third of the respondents work in a leadership role (27%) and half of that in a management role (14%). In the lower rates were either founders (3%) or respondents that preferred not to answer (5%).

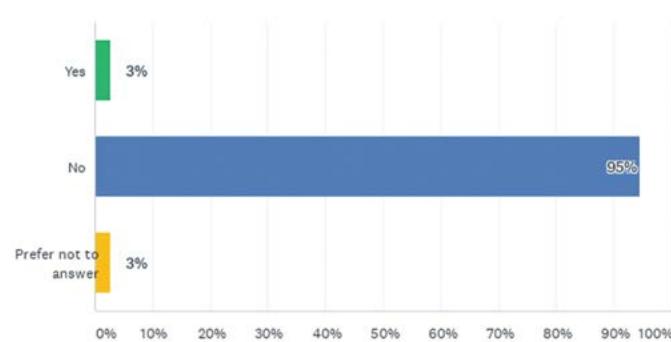
**Figure A5. Indigeneity of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=37)**



Respondents were asked if they identify as an Indigenous person\*. Very few answered yes (3%) when the majority answered no (95%). One respondent identified as Two-Spirit or Indigiqueer.

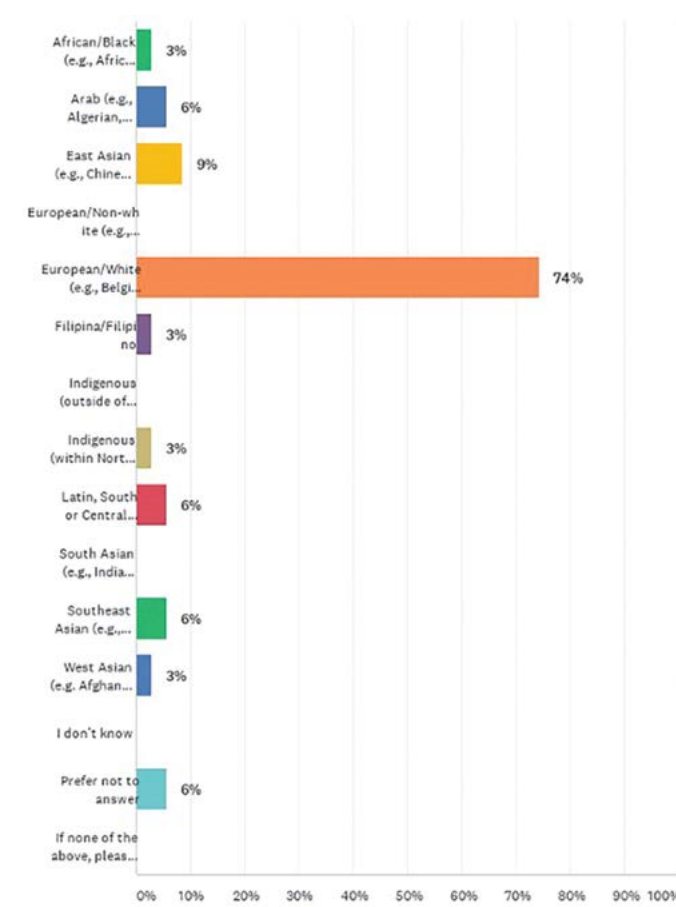
\*Note: For the purpose of this survey, Indigenous peoples include treaty, status/non-status, registered/non-registered members of First Nations, Métis or Inuit in Canada as well as Indigenous people from around the world.

**Figure A6. Racialization of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)**



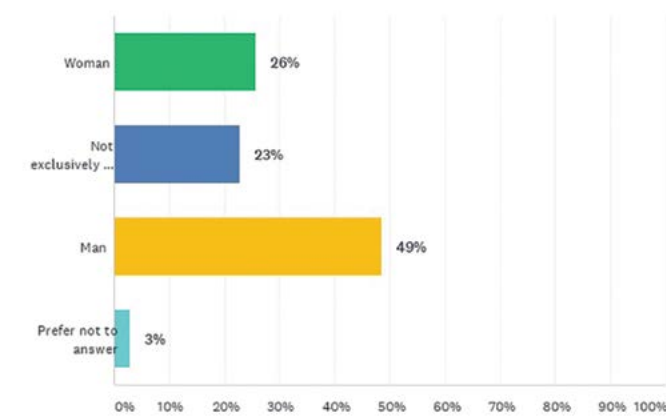
Respondents were asked if they identify as someone who is racialized\*, a visible minority, non-white, person of colour, or an analogous term. Most respondents answered no (95%) when very few answered yes (3%) or preferred not to answer (3%).

**Figure A7. Ancestry of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)**



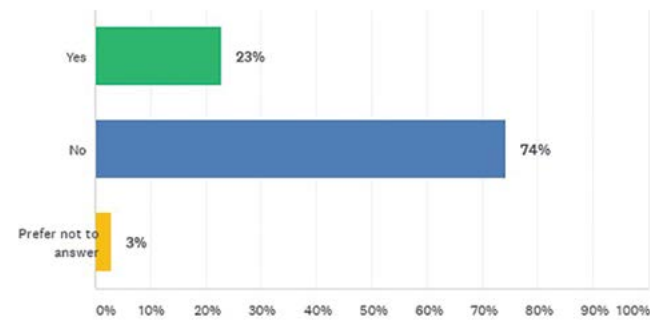
Respondents were asked how they identify their ancestry. Most respondents answered European/white (74%). One quarter of the respondents answered Asian (9% East Asian, 3% Filipinx, 6% South East Asian and 3% West Asian). Very few responded Arab (6%), Latinx (6%), African/Black (3%) or Indigenous (3%).

**Figure A8. Gender of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)**



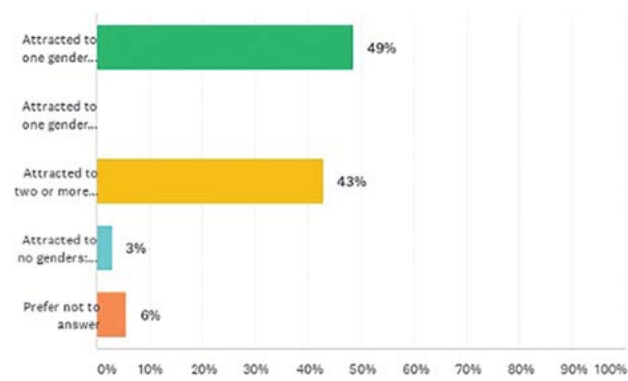
Respondents were asked what term most closely reflects their gender identity. Most respondents answered "man" (49%). One quarter of the respondents selected "woman" (24%) and nearly a quarter identified as "not exclusively a man or woman (e.g., non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, bi/polygender, agender)" (23%). 3% of the respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure A9. Gender Histories of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)



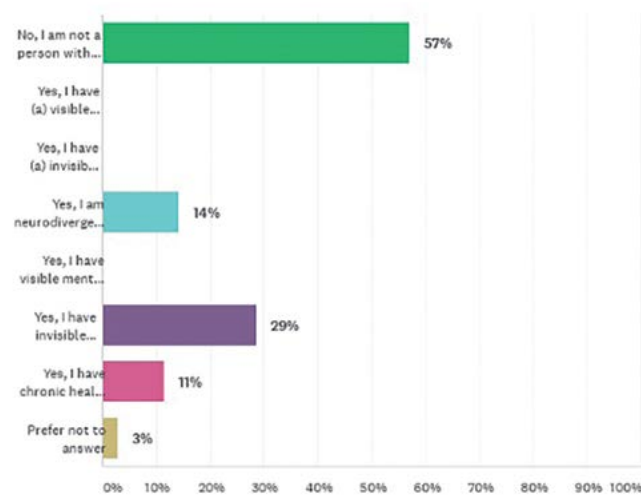
Respondents were asked if their gender identity is different than their sex assigned at birth. Most respondents answered no (74%) and one quarter of the respondents answered yes (23%). 3% of the respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure A10. Sexual Orientation of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)



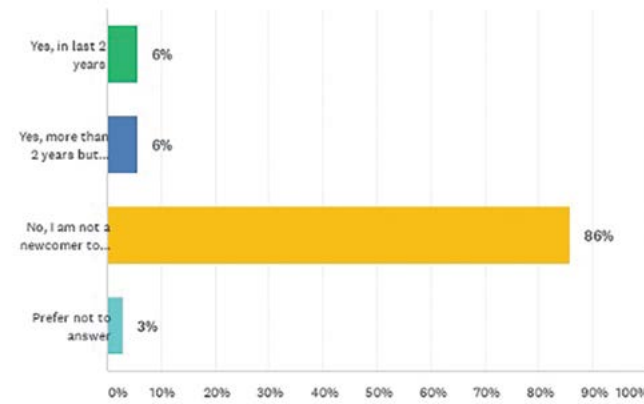
Respondents were asked what category most closely reflects their sexual orientation. Most respondents answered they are attracted to one and same gender (49%) and almost the same amount of respondents said they are attracted to two or more genders: Bisexual/Pansexual/Queer (43%). 6% of the respondents preferred not to answer and 3% are Asexual.

Figure A11. Disabilities of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)



Respondents were asked if they are a person with (a) disability(ies). Most respondents answered no (57%). One third of respondents have invisible mental health condition(s) (29%). Few respondents are neurodivergent (14%) or have chronic health condition(s) (11%). 3% of the respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure A12. Immigration Status of 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=35)

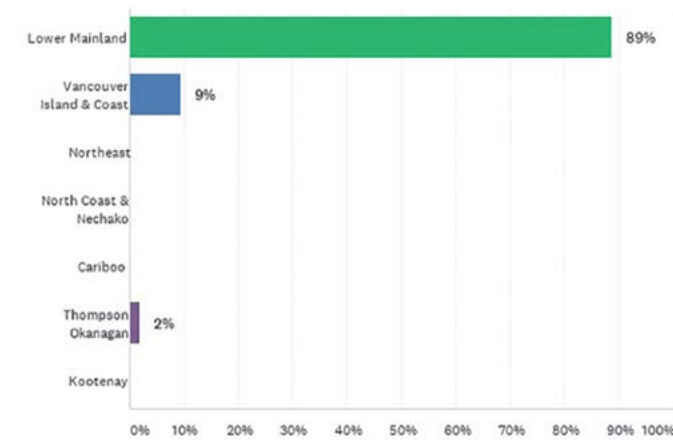


Respondents were asked if they are a newcomer to Canada, or in other words, if they have been in Canada for five years or less. Most respondents answered no (86%). 12% of the responders are newcomers to Canada with half having arrived less than 2 years ago and the other half between 2 and 5 years ago. 3% of the respondents preferred not to answer.

## Appendix B

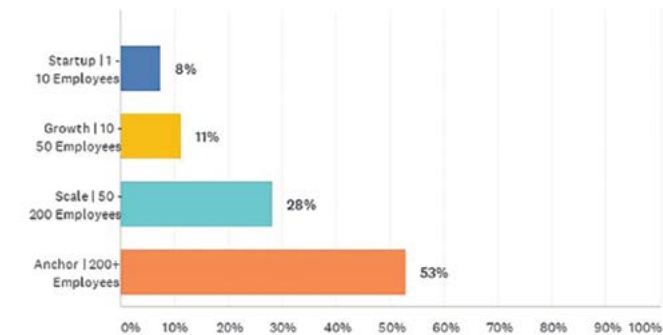
### Demographic and Background Information of HR Practitioners Respondents

Figure B1. Locations of HR Practitioner Respondents (N=53)



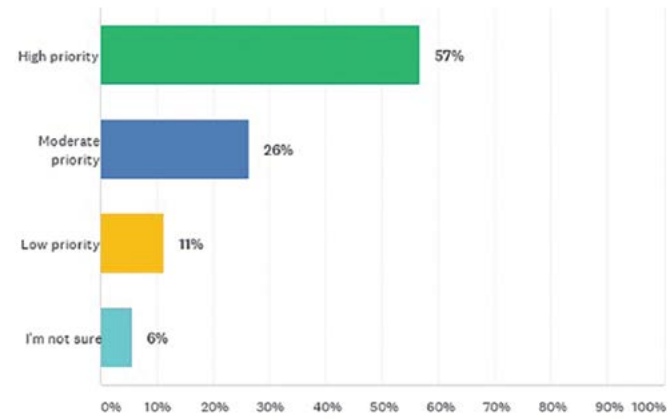
Respondents were asked which region they work in. Most respondents live and work in the Lower Mainland (89%). Some respondents live and work from Vancouver Island & Coast (9%) and very few from Thompson Okanagan (2%). No respondents work in the Northeast, North Coast & Nechako, Cariboo or Kootenay.

Figure B2. Sizes of Companies where HR Practitioner Respondents Work (N=37)



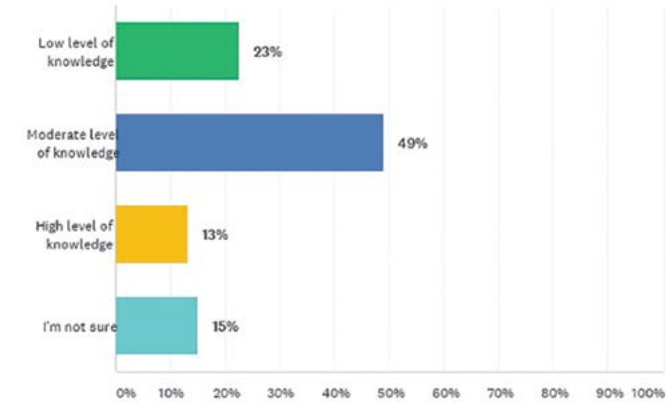
Respondents were asked about the size of the company they work at. About half of the respondents work in an Anchor type company (53%) and just over a quarter work in a Scale type company (28%). Few work in a Growth type of company (11%) or a Startup (8%).

**Figure B3. Levels of Priority Organizations Give to General EDI Objectives (N=53)**



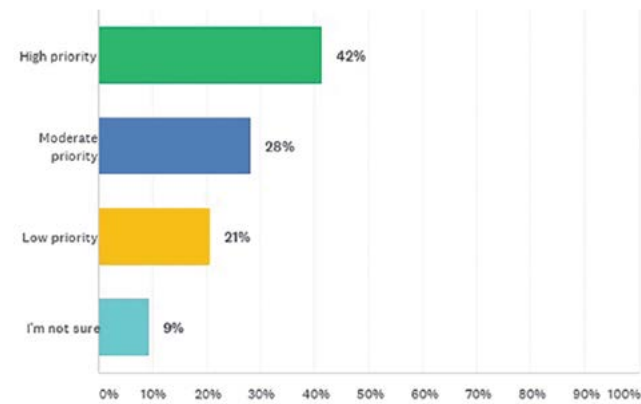
Respondents were asked about the level of priority their organization gives to general equity, inclusion, and diversity (EDI) objectives. Most respondents give it a high priority (57%). One quarter of the respondents give it a moderate priority (26%) and very few a low priority (11%) or are not sure (6%).

**Figure B6. Levels of Knowledge about Sexual Diversity (N=53)**



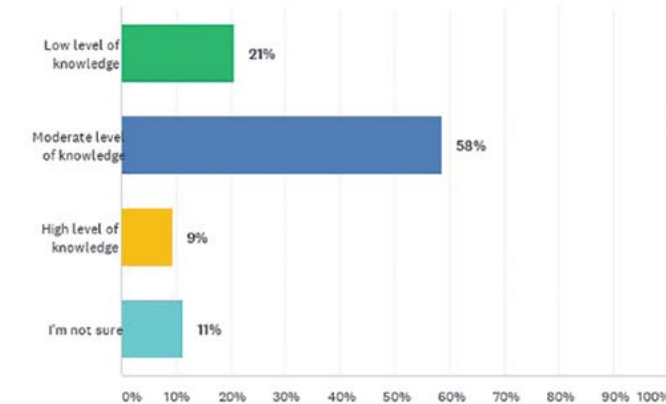
Respondents were asked about their level of knowledge of issues related to sexual diversity among employees at their company. Most respondents have a moderate level of knowledge (49%). One quarter of the respondents have a low level of knowledge (23%). Few have a high level of knowledge (13%) or are not sure (15%).

**Figure B4. Levels of Priority Organizations Give to General EDI Objectives Specific to Sexual Diversity (N=53)**



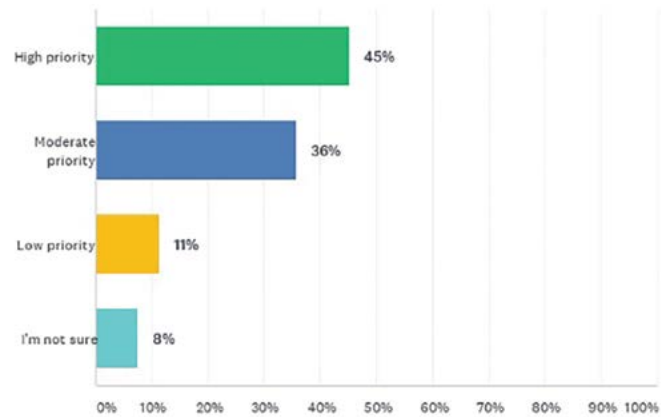
Respondents were asked about the level of priority their organization gives to equity, inclusion, and diversity (EDI) objectives specific to sexual diversity (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and asexual employees). Most respondents give it a high priority (42%). One quarter of the respondents give it a moderate priority (28%). Another quarter give it a low priority (21%) or are not sure (9%).

**Figure B7. Levels of Knowledge about Gender Diversity (N=53)**



Respondents were asked about their level of knowledge of issues related to gender diversity among employees at their company. Most respondents have a moderate level of knowledge (58%). One fifth of the respondents have a low level of knowledge (21%). Few have a high level of knowledge (9%) or are not sure (11%).

**Figure B5. Levels of Priority Organizations Give to General EDI Objectives Specific to Gender Diversity (N=53)**



Respondents were asked about the level of priority their organization gives to equity, inclusion, and diversity (EDI) objectives specific to gender diversity (e.g., transgender women, men, non-binary, agender employees). Most respondents give it a high priority (45%). One third of the respondents give it a moderate priority (36%). Few give it a low priority (11%) or are not sure (8%).

## Appendix C

### Notes from 2SLGBTQ+ Roundtable Discussion

Date: April 15, 2021

#### Existing Experiences

Roundtable attendees shared a range of experiences of being 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry. The common themes in the roundtable discussion include:

Being out as 2SLGBTQ+ in the workplace exists along a continuum and is dynamic dependent on the context and need. There is a range of progressiveness and conservativeness that co-exists in the tech industry. Within financing of tech, there is more conservativeness, which presents greater barriers to coming out and being one's authentic self.

Among attendees who are visible and/or out at work (often in positions of leadership), they expressed following issues and experiences:

- Feel the responsibility and pressure of representing and speaking to issues of other 2SLGBTQ people, especially those who are not out or at the table.
- Recognize the limitations of their experiences and insights. Their role is often to point out gaps and prompt for subject matter experts with lived experiences.
- Play powerful roles in championing and guiding companies to greater inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ people.
- The adverse effects of coming out are decreased by being in positions of leadership and influence.
- Importance of coming out to model to younger employees that it is possible to be oneself and be successful in the tech industry.
- Outness can be shared in conversation, but also some attendees have 2SLGBTQ+ diverse supplier certification through the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, which has an outing effect without necessarily sharing in person. Related to this effect, there is deliberation as to how much or little to showcase this certification, especially where more than the 2SLGBTQ+ professional is affected.
- Some roundtable attendees do not have any choice in being out because they are read as 2SLGBTQ by others.
- Sometimes other employees only see one aspect of 2SLGBTQ employees rather than respect and recognize them for being really good at their job.

Among attendees who are invisible and/or not out at work (especially among gender diverse attendees), they shared the following experiences:

- Desire to be more out and visible, but feel the work environment or industry is not safe or understanding.
- There is financial risk to being out.

There are also inter-group dynamics raised by attendees, including:

- Some LGB attendees recognize their privilege compared to trans and gender diverse professionals.
- LGB attendees recognize they still have much to learn about and from their trans and gender diverse counterparts.
- Presumed familiarity among 2SLGBTQ+ employees results in appropriate actions and language.
- Sometimes there is competition between 2SLGBTQ+ employees rather than being supportive.
- Roundtable attendees described greater challenges with their intersecting identities than being 2SLGBTQ:
- Some 2SLGBTQ+ women noted that they experience more challenges and discrimination for being women than being gay, primarily because the former is more visible than the latter.
- The same was echoed for trans women who felt more challenged by their treatment as women than being transgender. This included treatment, such as not being taken seriously and ideas not being listened to, which results in frequent repetition. These current experiences are a stark departure from pre-transition experiences.
- Some 2SLGBTQ+ people of colour experienced more racism than homophobia.

Experiences with repeated assumptions about the gender of one's partner in questions from other employees (i.e., presumption of heterosexuality).

Trans experiences vary based on outward appearances. If trans people appear more heteronormative, they experience greater levels of acceptance from other employees. However, those who are more androgynous, experience more hesitation and discomfort from other employees.

Even if workplaces are assessed as safe, there are still aspects of internalized phobias that present 2SLGBTQ+ professionals from sharing more about themselves with others.

Some roundtable attendees were advised and encouraged by co-workers and by family members to stay in the closet or hide parts of their volunteer experiences to avoid adverse impacts on their careers.

Challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry have changed and diminished over the years. This has paralleled with seasoned professionals becoming more confident in their career to share more of themselves, including being 2SLGBT.

Despite improvements, several roundtable attendees noted that the remaining subtle forms of discrimination are more difficult to identify and address.

There are more options for mentorship than there are formal 2SLGBTQ+ networking opportunities in BC. There are pockets of informal networking.

There are additional considerations and unique risks that 2SLGBTQ+ employees face when travelling abroad for work.

Participation in Blood Drives can be uniquely difficult and potentially outing to 2SLGBTQ+ employees given the current blood ban on gay men and trans people.

Roundtable attendees shared that they notice the tech industry thinks it is inclusive and progressive. However, it is often only focused on a narrow slice of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and continues to exclude people at the intersections with other identities.

As of last year (2020), diversity and inclusion conversations in companies have shifted considerably. They are more front and centre. There is now greater interest in establishing committees and developing policies to advance EDI objectives.

Smaller companies tend to have more entrenched “bro culture” with company events supporting this.

Some attendees spoke to their reasons for not raising their challenges with HR:

- Witnessed how it did not turn out well for others who reported.
- Uncertainty about what will happen to the other person, including not wanting them to get fired.
- Lack of transparency within HR about the number of cases they handle and their outcomes. This has a detrimental effect on trust.
- Investigative processes in HR are colonial given their focus on compliance to legislation. This does not mix well with inclusion efforts at companies.
- The HR process is also focused on keeping parties separated while investigating the matters rather than fostering safe and constructive dialogue between employees.
- HR appears to be focused on tasks rather than emotional support of employees.

“They did a shitty thing, but I don’t want them to get fired!”

**2SLGBTQ+ Roundtable Attendee**

“Tech has not changed. I have changed [by having greater confidence].”

**2SLGBTQ+ Roundtable Attendee**

“We’re [identified as] that [LGBTQ] power couple, rather than them [co-workers] seeing me as being really good at my job.”

**2SLGBTQ+ Roundtable Attendee**

## Ideas and Suggestions

Roundtable attendees shared several ideas and suggestions for creating greater inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals in the tech industry. These include:

- Representation matters to 2SLGBTQ+ professionals.
- Being more inclusive of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals will lead to companies being more effective, efficient, and innovative.
- The research shows that diverse teams are stronger and more resilient.
- Especially with the tech industry’s labour shortage, they cannot afford to be exclusionary.
- The economy is growing as gender equity increases. The same could happen with the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals.
- Visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ professionals is really important. For greater visibility to happen, work environments need to be safe(r). This is achieved through frequent and public messaging about 2SLGBTQ+ issues. For example, showcasing out 2SLGBTQ+ professionals is part of this messaging. The importance of out 2SLGBTQ+ leaders cannot be understated as a source of possibility for others.
- The tech industry needs to develop resources for smaller companies that do not have the funding to ensure 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion on their own.
- Collection of data on sexual and gender diversity is a first and important step. However, these need to be tied to goals (e.g., a company has 1% 2SLGBTQ+ professionals and by 2025 the company aims to have 10%). And diversity data needs to be reported at different levels of leadership, not just overall. And diversity data are only part of the solution. It is also important to gather stories and humanize the issues.
- Roundtable attendees want EDI efforts to be a part of company DNA (not just lip service). One litmus test is: Are companies willing to forgo working with a client that is known to be transphobic? And if the going gets tough, are EDI efforts dropped?
- It is important for leaders of companies to speak to 2SLGBTQ+ issues in a public manner. They should also attend training sessions on 2SLGBTQ+ issues rather than thinking training is just for managers.

“Give them [2SLGBTQ+ professionals] an opportunity to shine!”

**2SLGBTQ+ Roundtable Attendee**

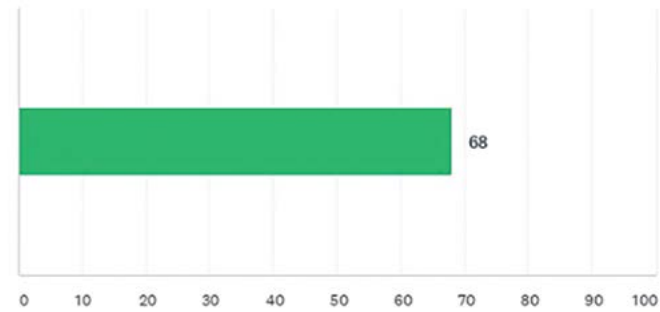
“Inclusion is about expanding what is possible. We need to show people in power that if they share their power and include more people, the pie will get bigger.”

**2SLGBTQ+ Roundtable Attendee**

## Appendix D

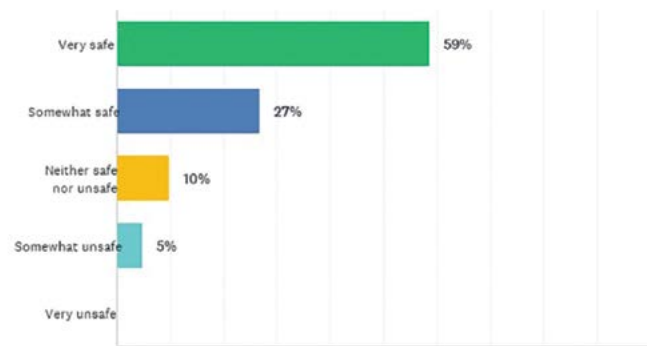
### Survey of Experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ Employees

Figure D1. Average Rating of experience 2SLGBTQ+ Professional (N=41)



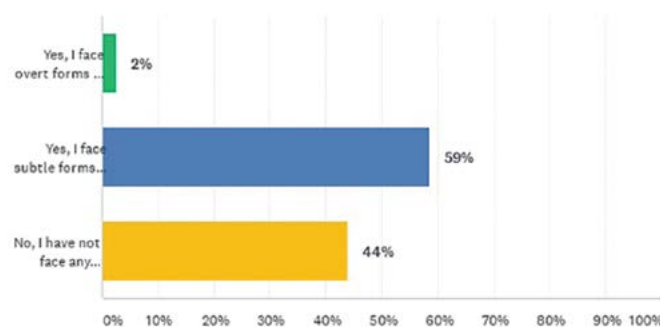
Respondents were asked about their experiences as an 2SLGBTQ+ person that is specific or unique to working in the tech industry. Respondents answered on a scale from “very negative” to “very positive” (represented here as 0 to 100). On average, respondents rate their experience as somewhat positive (68\*).

Figure D2. Levels of Safety among 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=41)



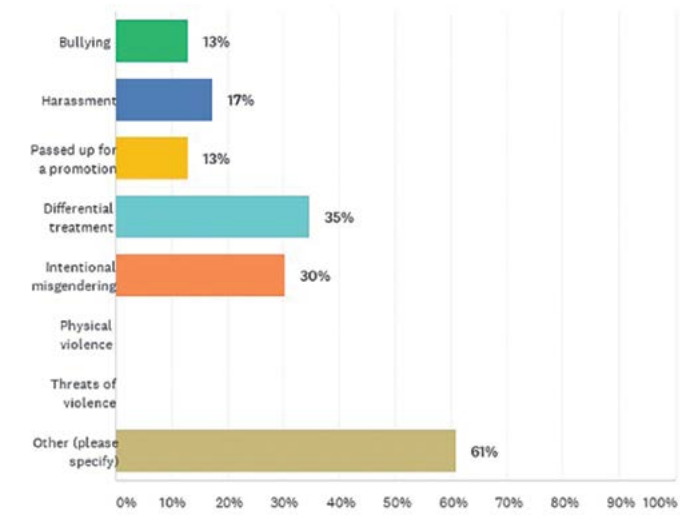
Respondents were asked to rate the level of safety at their workplace as a 2SLGBTQ+ person. The majority of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents (86%) say they feel very or somewhat safe at work. Few 2SLGBTQ+ respondents (15%) feel neither or somewhat unsafe and no respondents feel very unsafe.

Figure D3. Levels of Discrimination among 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=41)



Respondents were asked if they have or do face discrimination in the tech industry related to them being 2SLGBTQ+. The majority of 2SLGBTQ+ respondents (59%) say they experience subtle forms of discrimination. Few responded (2%) with overt forms of discrimination (bullying, harassment, passed up for a promotion).

Figure D4. Types of Discrimination among 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents (N=23)\*

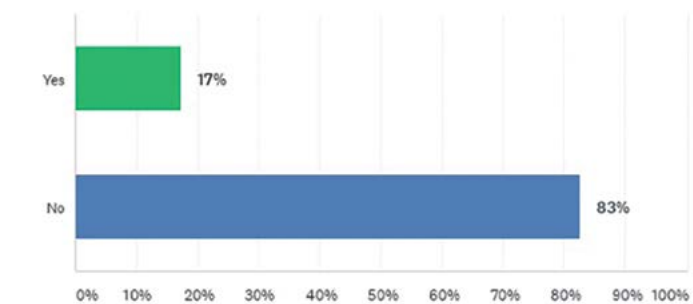


Respondents were asked what specific types of discrimination they experience in the tech industry related to them being 2SLGBTQ+. The most common types of discrimination experienced by the respondents are differential treatment (35%) and intentional misgendering (30%). A few respondents overt forms of discriminations such as harassment (17%), bullying (13%) or being passed up for a promotion (13%). Physical violence or threats of violence were not reported by respondents.

\*Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to ability to select all that apply

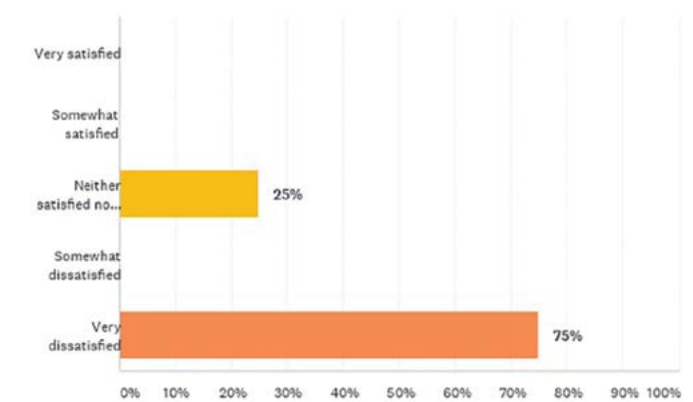
More than half of respondents chose to answer “other” to share more about the type of discrimination they experience(d). To them, discrimination is also represented in “inappropriate jokes,” “invasive questions,” “intense cis-normativity,” “assumption with regards to gender expression and sexual orientation,” and “microaggressions.”

Figure D5. Levels of Reports of Discrimination to Human Resources (N=23)



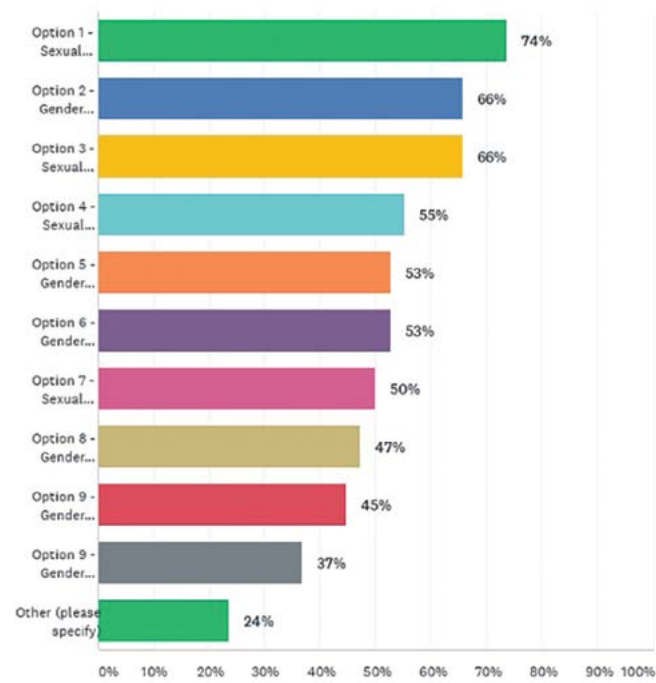
Respondents were asked if they reported the discrimination they experienced to Human Resources. Most respondents (83%) did not report it.

Figure D6. Levels of Satisfaction Human Resources Handling of Discrimination (N=4)



Of the 17% of respondents, who reported to HR, they were asked about the level of satisfaction with how Human Resources handled the situation(s). Most respondents (75%) are very dissatisfied. Figure 3.1-6 represents the levels of satisfaction with how Human Resources handled the situation(s).

**Figure D7. Preferences among 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents for Employer Measures (N=38)\***



\*Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to ability to select all that apply

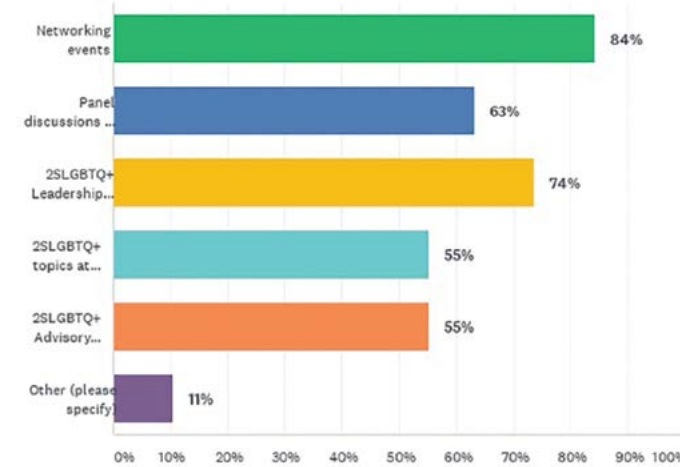
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Option 1 - Sexual Orientation: Avoid assumptions and provide more space to share about one's life (e.g., partner(s) or community affiliation and activities)	74% 28
Option 2 - Gender Identity: Avoid assumptions and provide more space to provide one's pronouns and lived experiences	66% 25
Option 3 - Sexual Orientation: Training to educate employees about sexual diversity and how to include in the workplace	66% 25
Option 4 - Sexual Orientation: An employee resource group that includes the issues faced by those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer.	55% 21
Option 5 - Gender Identity: Training to educate employees on how to respectfully interact with transgender and gender diverse people in the workplace	53% 20
Option 6 - Gender Identity: Ways to coordinate with issues facing women in the tech industry	53% 20
Option 7 - Sexual Orientation: More inclusive sexual diversity data collection and uses	50% 19
Option 8 - Gender Identity: Coverage of gender-affirming procedures not covered by Medical Services Plan	47% 18
Option 9 - Gender Identity: More inclusive gender diversity data collection and uses	45% 17
Option 9 - Gender Identity: Clear procedures about disclosing one's gender on the job	37% 14
Other (please specify)	Responses 24% 9
<b>Total Respondents: 38</b>	

Respondents were asked which of the options they would want to see their employer implement to address issues particular to 2SLGBTQ+ people in the tech industry. The option most chosen by the respondents is avoiding assumptions and providing more space to share (74%): for example by introducing partner(s) or community affiliation and activities. Other highly requested options were providing more space to provide one's pronouns and lived experiences (66%). According to respondents, it is important to them to educate employees about sexual diversity in the workplace (66%) and on how to respectfully interact with transgender and gender diverse people in the workplace (53%).

Furthermore, 55% of the respondents would like to see an employee resource group be created that includes the issues faced by those who are 2SLGBTQ+. 53% of the respondents would like to see ways to coordinate with issues facing women in the tech industry.

Some respondents suggested more inclusive sexual diversity and gender diversity data collection and uses could be an option as well (50% and 45%). Also, 47% of the respondents requested coverage of gender-affirming procedures not covered by the Medical Services Plan and a couple of respondents requested counseling, therapy or mentorship programs covered by their employer. Lastly, 37% of the respondents would like clear procedures about disclosing one's gender on the job introduced. Figure 3.1-7 represents the options that 2SLGBTQ+ people would want to see their employer implement to address issues particular to the tech industry.

**Figure D8. Preferences of options among 2SLGBTQ+ Respondents in Tech Industry (N=38)**

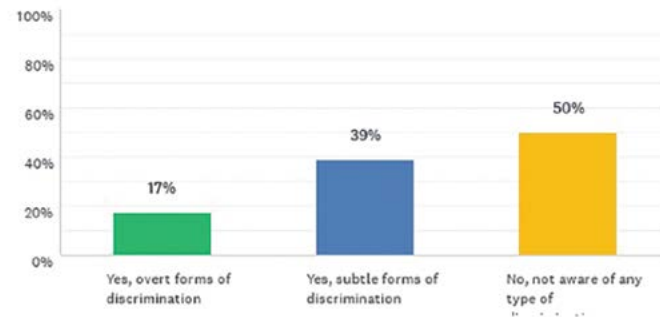


Respondents were asked which option they would want to participate in if they were available in the tech industry. Most respondents would prefer to participate in networking events (84%). 74% of the respondents would also like to participate in 2SLGBTQ+ Leadership Programs. Panel discussions on 2SLGBTQ+ issues in tech would interest 63% of the respondents. 55% of the respondents would like to see an 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee and/or 2SLGBTQ+ topics at the annual conference.

## Appendix E

### Survey of Experiences of HR Practitioners

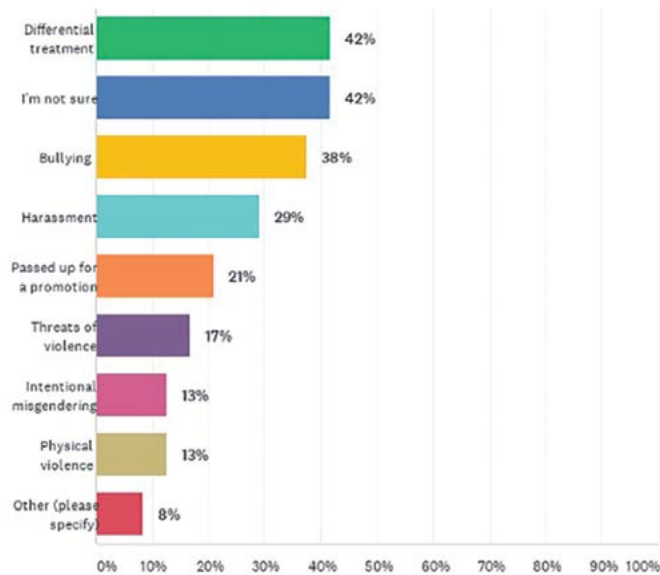
Figure E1. Levels of Discrimination at Workplace related to Sexual or Gender Diversity (N=46)



Respondents were asked if in the past 5 years, they are aware of or involved in addressing any discrimination at their workplace related to sexual or gender diversity. Half of the respondents responded that they are not aware of or involved in addressing this type of discrimination (50%).

Of the ones who are aware, 39% are aware of or involved in addressing subtle forms of discrimination (e.g., jokes, invasive questions, assumptions, or misgendering) and 17% in addressing overt forms of discrimination (e.g., bullying, harassment, passed up for a promotion).

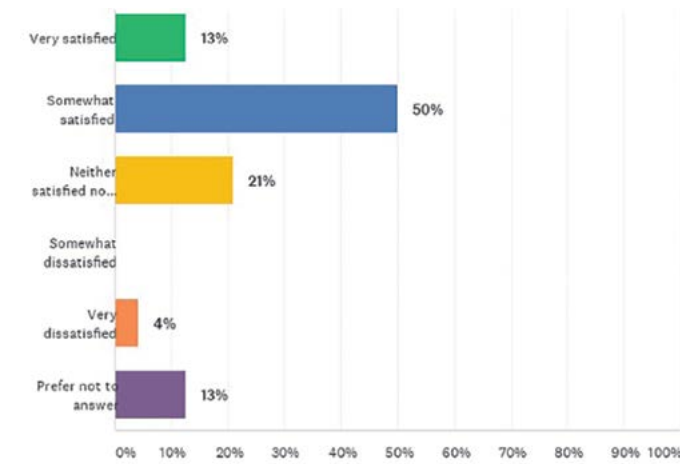
Figure E2. Types of Discrimination related to Sexual or Gender Diversity (N=24)\*



Respondents were asked what specific form(s) of overt discrimination they are aware of or involved in addressing related to sexual or gender diversity. The most common types of discrimination made aware of or involving the respondents are differential treatment (42%). A high rate of respondents answered that they are not sure (42%). Bullying (38%) and harassment (29%) have also been brought up often to the respondents' attention. One-fifth of HR respondents (21%) witnessed 2SLGBTQ+ employees being passed up for a promotion. Threats of violence (17%) and physical violence (13%) were also reported to respondents.

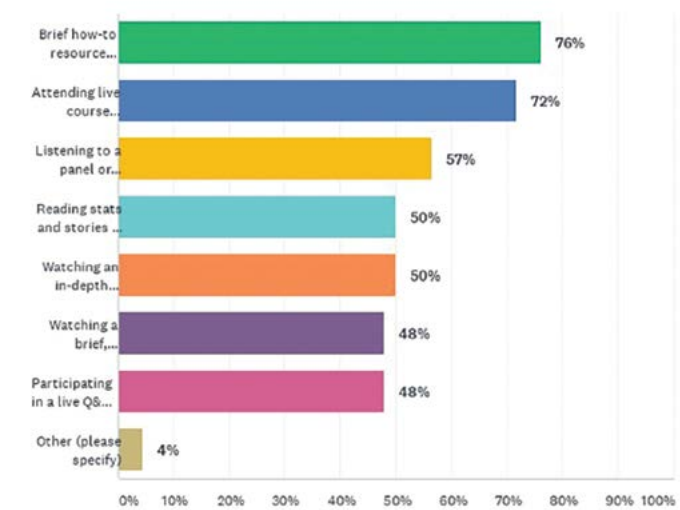
\*Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to ability to select all that apply

Figure E3. Levels of Satisfaction with Human Resources Handling (N=24)



Respondents were asked about the level of satisfaction with how they or others in Human Resources handled the situation(s). Most HR respondents (63%) are somewhat (50%) or very satisfied (13%). One-fifth of HR respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (21%) and 13% prefer not to answer.

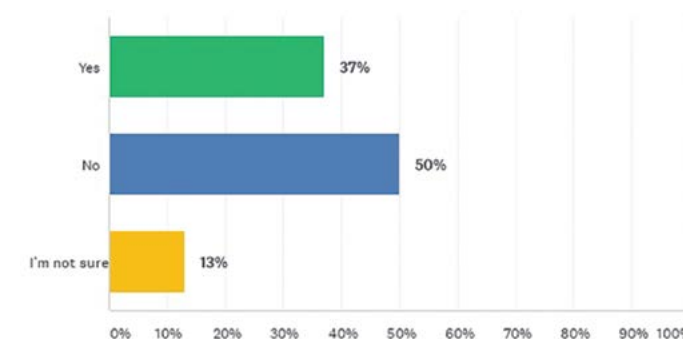
Figure E4. Preferred Supports to Better Handle 2SLGBTQ+ Issues in the Workplace (N=46)\*



Respondents were asked which are the preferred types of support they want or need to better handle issues involving sexual and gender diversity in the workplace. The option most chosen by the respondents is a brief how-to resource specific to the tech industry (76%). A high requested option is attending a live course instruction (72%) and one respondent suggested a workshop (2%). According to respondents, a few other types of support that are important to them are listening to a panel or podcast (57%), Reading stats and stories in case studies (50%), watching an in-depth explainer video (50%) or a brief, pre-recorded video (48%). 48% of the respondents would also like to participate in a live Q&A session.

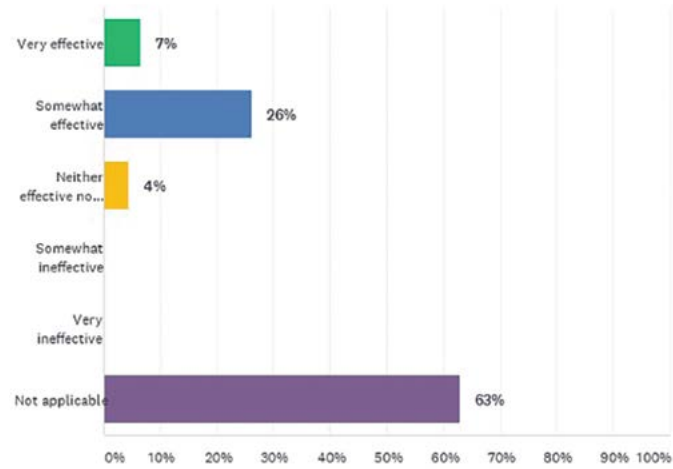
\*Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to ability to select all that apply

Figure E5. Whether Employees Receive Training on the Topic of Sexual Diversity (N=46)



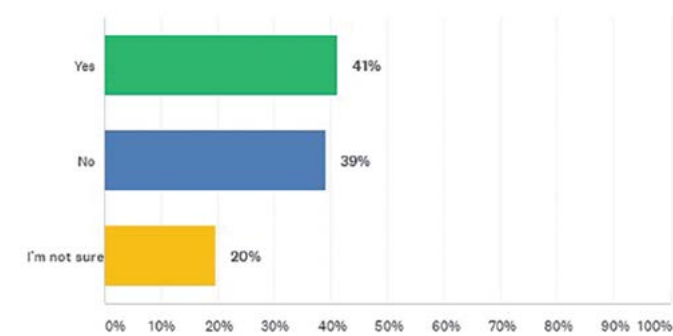
Respondents were asked if their organization provided any training to their employees on the topic of sexual diversity. Half of the respondents answered no (50%). 37% of the respondents answered yes and 13% are not sure.

**Figure E6. Levels of Effectiveness of Training on the Topic of Sexual Diversity (N=46)**



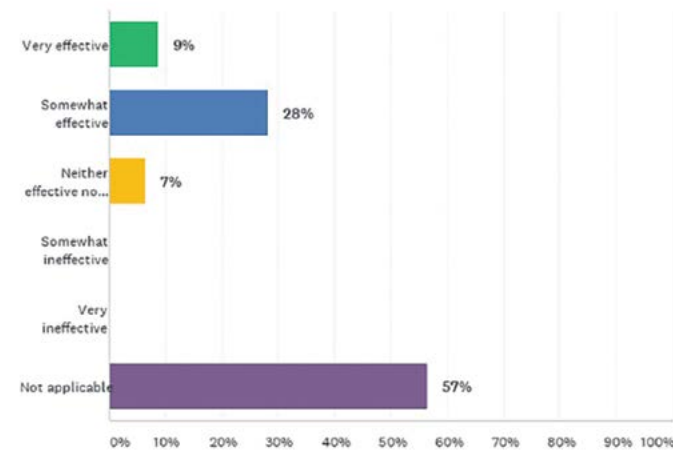
The 37% of respondents that answered “yes” were asked to rate the effectiveness of this training at their organization (on the topic of sexual diversity). Most of the HR respondents found it somewhat to very effective. Very few found it neither effective nor ineffective and none of the respondents found it ineffective.

**Figure E7. Whether Employees Receive Training on the Topic of Gender Diversity (N=46)**



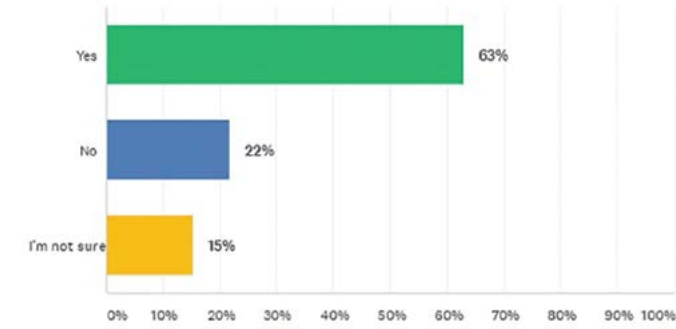
Respondents were asked if their organization provided any training to their employees on the topic of gender diversity. Under half of the respondents answered yes (41%) and no (39%). 20% of the respondents are not sure.

**Figure E8. Levels of Effectiveness of Training on the Topic of Gender Diversity (N=46)**



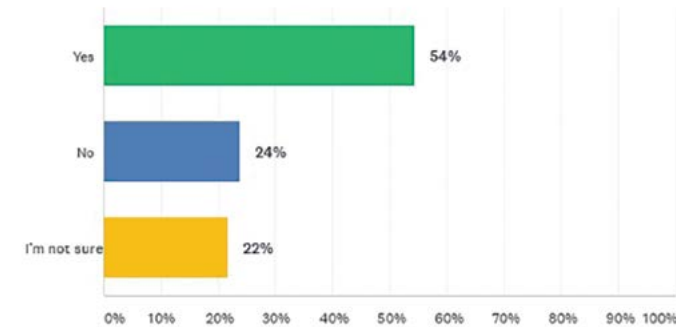
The 41% of respondents that answered “yes” were asked to rate the effectiveness of this training at their organization (on the topic of gender diversity). Most of the respondents found it somewhat to very effective. Very few found it neither effective nor ineffective and none of the respondents found it ineffective.

**Figure E9. Existence of Supportive Policies with Reference to Sexual Diversity (N=46)**



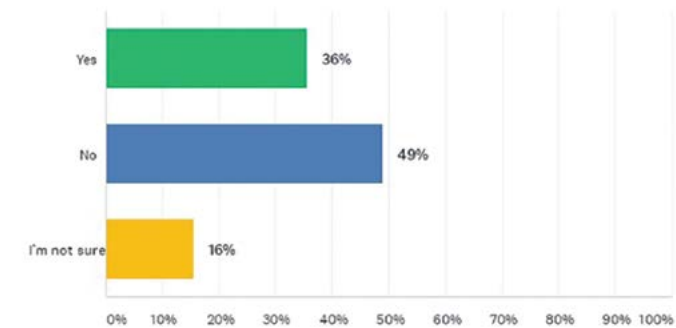
Respondents were asked if there are any supportive policies or procedures that include specific references to sexual diversity in their organization. Two thirds of the respondents responded that there are supportive policies or procedures that include specific references to sexual diversity in their organization (63%). 22% answered no and 15% are not sure.

**Figure E10. Existence of Supportive Policies with Reference to Gender Diversity (N=46)**



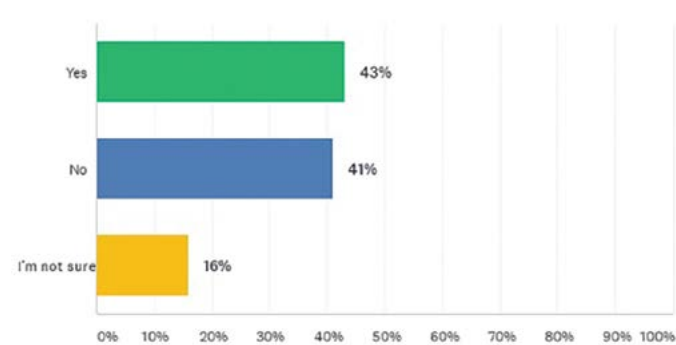
Respondents were asked if there are any supportive policies or procedures that include specific references to gender diversity in their organization. Half of the respondents responded that there are supportive policies or procedures that include specific references to gender diversity (54%). 24% answered no and 22% are not sure.

**Figure E11. Existence of Employee Data on Sexual Diversity (N=45)**



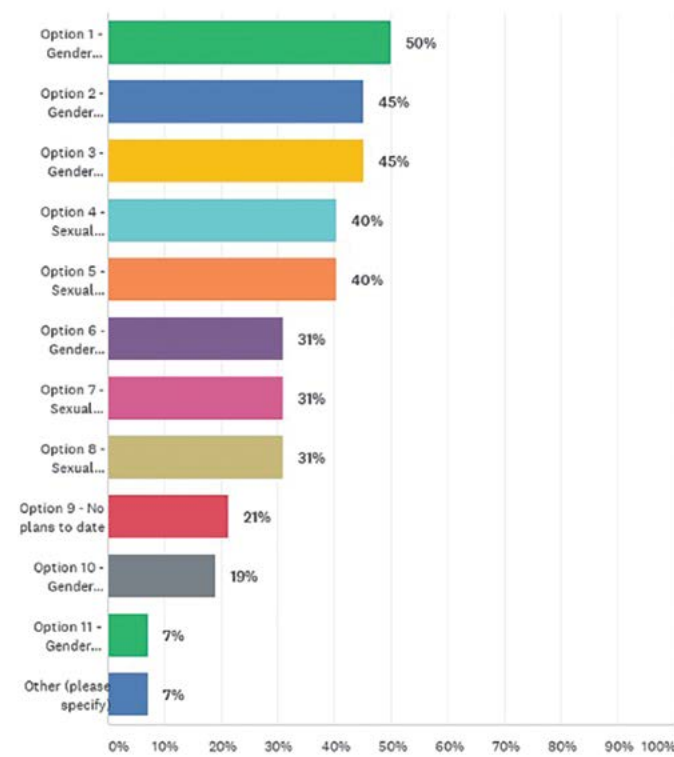
Respondents were asked if their company collects employee census data that include sexual diversity. Half of the respondents responded no (49%), 36% answered yes and 16% are not sure.

**Figure E12. Existence of Employee Data on Gender Diversity (N=44)**



Respondents were asked if their company collects employee census data that include gender diversity. Under half of the respondents answered yes (43%) and no (41%). 16% of the respondents are not sure.

**Figure E13. Plans to Implement Measures to Address 2SLGBTQ+ Issues (N=42)\***



\*Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to ability to select all that apply

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Option 1 - Gender Identity: Avoid assumptions and provide more space to provide one's pronouns and lived experiences	50% 21
Option 2 - Gender Identity: Training to educate employees on how to respectfully interact with transgender and gender diverse people in the workplace	45% 19
Option 3 - Gender Identity: Ways to coordinate with issues facing women in the tech industry	45% 19
Option 4 - Sexual Orientation: Training to educate employees about sexual diversity and how to include in the workplace	40% 17
Option 5 - Sexual Orientation: Avoid assumptions and provide more space to share about one's life (e.g., partner(s), community affiliation and activities).	40% 17
Option 6 - Gender Identity: More inclusive gender diversity data collection and uses	31% 13
Option 7 - Sexual Orientation: More inclusive sexual diversity data collection and uses	31% 13
Option 8 - Sexual Orientation: An employee resource group that includes the issues faced by those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer.	31% 13
Option 9 - No plans to date	21% 9
Option 10 - Gender Identity: Clear procedures about disclosing one's gender on the job	19% 8
Option 11 - Gender Identity: Coverage of gender-affirming procedures not covered by Medical Services Plan	7% 3
Other (please specify) Responses	7% 3
<b>Total Respondents: 42</b>	

Respondents were asked which of the options their organization plans to implement to address issues particular to sexual and gender diverse people in the tech industry. The option most chosen by the respondents is avoiding assumptions and providing more space to provide one's pronouns and lived experiences (50%). A high requested option is providing training to educate employees on how to respectfully interact with transgender and gender diverse people in the workplace (45%). Another 45% of the respondents would like to see ways to coordinate with issues facing women in the tech industry.

According to respondents, it is important to them to educate employees about sexual diversity in the workplace (40%) and avoiding assumptions and provide more space to share about one's life (40%). 31% of the respondents would like to see more inclusive gender and sexual diversity data collection and uses. 31% of the respondents would like to implement an employee resource group that includes the issues faced by those who are 2SLGBTQ+.

Some respondents suggested clear procedures about disclosing one's gender on the job (19%) and 7% of the respondents requested coverage of gender-affirming procedures not covered by the Medical Services Plan. Lastly, 21% of the respondents have no plans to date. Figure 3.2-13 represents the options that HR Practitioners and their organization plan to implement to address issues particular to sexual and gender diverse people in the tech industry.



In partnership, the Discovery Foundation and BC Tech are proud to publish the 2SLGBTQ+ Insights report.



Thank you to our research partner:

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