

# COVID-19 and Mental Health Among Sexual Minorities: A Qualitative Study of Service Users and Providers

## Study Sample

May to September of 2020

**15** healthcare providers and administrators who work with sexual minorities in British Columbia, Canada were interviewed.

October to December of 2020

**27** respondents of the 'Sex in the Time of COVID-19' survey (service users) were interviewed.

**15** self-identified as sexual minorities.

*"...this is definitely my most anxious year, I don't feel quite like myself, but I wouldn't say depressed, just pretty like anxious, uncomfortably anxious sometimes."*

- SERVICE USER, WOMAN, BISEXUAL

## Increased Isolation



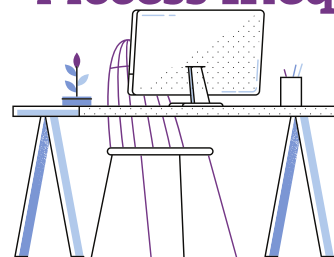
*"...for a number of cultural reasons gay men...may live alone for the rest of their lives and...their friend circle is one that they are really reliant on for the supports that they would typically require and because of...the strictness of social distancing and whatever else they're really missing those supports..."*

- health promotion manager

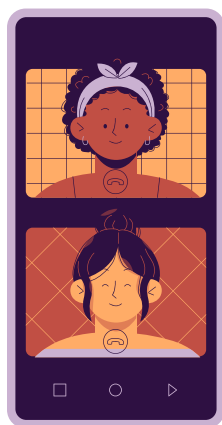
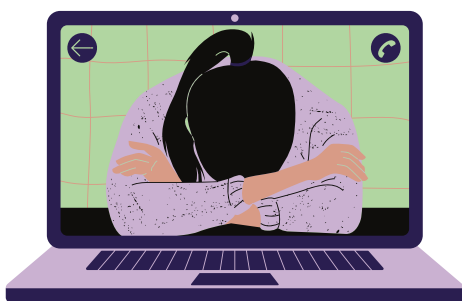
*"...my biggest fear right now is ... folks with marginalized gender and sexual identities that are not in safe spaces for them and don't... have access to any privacy that would allow them to even reach out for the mental health support that they need."*

- clinical counsellor

## Mental Health Service Access Inequities



## Remote Service Benefits



*"...[COVID-19] made virtual counselling more acceptable... So that's a big silver lining especially when we're trying to reach a population that for a number of reasons may not have access or may not be safe going into a space that's specifically queer or who live in places where such services just aren't available to them."*

- health promotion manager

## System-Level Needs for Equitable Mental Health:

Publicly funding LGBTQ+-affirming mental health support

Develop evidence-based policy and practice guidelines for equitable digital mental healthcare

Increase access to 2S/LGBTQ+-affirming messaging across the life course through community empowerment programming

If you have any questions, please email Travis Salway at [travis\\_salway@sfu.ca](mailto:travis_salway@sfu.ca)  
Please also visit the [BC Alliance for Monitoring Mental Health Equity's website](#)