**Children and Youth Planning Table**
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# Timely child and youth well-being data released by the Children and Youth Planning Table

## Disaggregated Experiences of Discrimination due to Sexual Orientation Snapshot from the 2021 Waterloo Region Youth Impact Survey is now available.

**Waterloo Region, June 2022** – Disaggregated data from the Youth Impact Survey (YIS) focused on experiences of discrimination due to sexual orientation provides a much-needed snapshot of the lives of many children and youth in our community over the last year.

The Children and Youth Planning Table's (CYPT) vision of happy, healthy children and youth— today and tomorrow, applies to all children and youth in our community. Given the importance of centering equity, social inclusion, and anti-discrimination in our belonging-related work, the CYPT is disaggregating the 2021 Youth Impact Survey across a variety of demographic and identity-based dimensions.

This Snapshot focuses on **experiences of discrimination due to sexual orientation** (EDSO) and data has been disaggregated into two different categories.

The CYPT, in partnership UNICEF Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), KW Community Foundation and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) at the University of Waterloo ran the Waterloo Region Youth Impact Survey for young people in our community through the Spring of 2021. The survey was an opportunity for young people in our community to speak to their own well-being. Data from the 1074 young people in Waterloo Region who participated completed the survey was published in December of 2021.

The YIS asked questions across 9 dimensions of well-being based on the Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being including belonging, mental and emotional health, connection to the environment and more. The ultimate goal of the disaggregated YIS Snapshot Briefs is to provide members of our community with equity-focused insights that take into account the needs and interests of different groups of children and youth.

Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region

**Fast Facts:**

- 1074 youth from diverse backgrounds completed the Waterloo Region Waterloo Region Youth Impact Survey between April 30 and June 5, 2021.
- In total, almost one in 10 (9.3%) respondents identified experiencing discrimination due to their sexual orientation.
- Aggregate data suggests that 64.1% of all YIS respondents said they felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their community. After disaggregating our data, we see that those only about one-third (35.5%) of respondents with EDSO said they felt a strong or very strong sense of belonging. About two-thirds (67.0%) of respondents with No EDSO said they felt a strong or very strong sense of belonging
- UNICEF Canada defines belonging as "feeling loved and supported and having mutually caring and respectful relationships."9 This love and support can come from many sources including friends, family, teachers, pets, and people in the community. Locally, when we think about belonging for children and youth, we recognize the importance of equity, relationships and attachment, and feeling valued, heard and included.
- Self-assessed mental health also saw significant differences between the two groups. Only about one in 10 (10.2%) of youth with EDSO described their mental health as more positive—a 49.5 percentage point difference from those with no EDSO.

**Next Steps:**

- The CYPT's next steps include disaggregating the data along eight other subpopulations of young people including: age, gender identity, racial identity, those with special needs and more. We are also working directly with young people in the community in co-creating meaningful actions to support the needs raised from the Youth Impact Survey.

**Quotes from Respondents:**

"I think there should be more resources for LGBTQ+ youth and not just during pride month."
—2021 YIS Respondent

"I am so disappointed that there is so little LGBTQ+ And female representation in popular media."
—2021 YIS Respondent

**Making Sense of these Findings:**

"The CYPT Youth Impact Survey confirms what we expected to find of the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth in our community. These youth are often vulnerable and many are not finding the supports they need to live safe and fulfilled lives as their authentic selves. I hope that these findings will help to encourage families, educators, service providers, and funders to consider carefully how they might work to improve the situation for 2SLGBTQ+ youth here in Waterloo Region."

—Scott Williams
Executive Director SPECTRUM Waterloo Region

**About the CYPT:**

The Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT) is a member-driven partnership with over 60 Voting Member Organizations across Waterloo Region. The CYPT works to improve the wellbeing of children and youth through a system of coordinated and effective services that are supported by capacity building initiatives. Recognizing the complex challenges and issues related to the well-being of children and youth, the CYPT operates through a collective impact model seeking to promote the shared vision of: Happy, healthy children and youth—today and tomorrow.

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