

Navigating Digital Harms:

An Investigation of Transphobic
Online Hate Against 2SLGBTQIA+
Organizations

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Abstract

Transphobic online hate is on the rise in Canada. To better understand transphobic online hate, its impacts, and how it has been addressed thus far, the Open Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN) partnered with Wisdom2Action (W2A) to conduct an online survey and interviews with Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary professionals working for 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations in Canada. This report summarizes the research findings, which are organized by themes that emerged during data analysis. The report also offers recommendations for 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations to mitigate and address transphobic online hate.

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Land Acknowledgement

The Open Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN) operates on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations that precede the colonial state of Canada. The area where we primarily work, know as Tkarón:to (Toronto), which is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit and is the traditional territory of the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat.

The territory is subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceable share and care for the Great Lakes region.

Wisdom2Action (W2A) acknowledges the land on which it was originally established as the traditional and unceded homeland of the Mi'kmaq, known as Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia). Settlers and the Mi'kmaq have lived on these lands under the provisions of the Peace and Friendship Treaties since 1725. The W2A team is spread across Turtle Island (Canada) on the homelands of many First Nations. We recognize the people and the land in this way as part of our commitment to truth and reconciliation, anti-oppression and decolonization. We are all treaty people.

It is important in the spirit of reconciliation to acknowledge that we live and work on Indigenous land. W2A and ODLAN are committed to decolonizing both digital and physical spaces and stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples, communities, and nations.

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Glossary

2SLGBTQIA+

stands for Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual people, and people of other marginalized gender and/or sexual identities.

2STN+

stands for Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary people, with the plus being inclusive of people who are gender nonconforming and/or intersex.

BIPOC

is an acronym for Black, Indigenous, and people of colour or racialized people.

Cisgender

refers to a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cyberbullying

or cyberharassment, is when an individual or group uses technology (e.g., text messages, defamatory websites, email, direct messages) to harass, intimidate, or harm another person.

Cyberstalking

is the repeated use of electronic communications to stalk or harass a person, group, or organization online.

Cyberviolence

is a form of violence that is enacted partially or fully by the use of technology. Cyberviolence is a form of cyberbullying.

Digital-to-physical violence

is a pattern of escalation that starts with harmful behaviours in digital spaces and continues with in-person acts of violence. As such, this term often describes physical violence that has been preceded by threats or hate messages sent online.

Disinformation

is false or misleading information that is intended to deceive and influence public opinion about specific topics and/or issues.

Doxxing

(or doxing) is the act of publicly disseminating someone's information via the internet, often with the malicious intent of encouraging other people to harass, stalk, intimidate, threaten, and/or commit violence against their target. Personal information can be deduced and collected by examining the targeted individual's online presence, such as their photos, email address, phone number, home address, job information, family information, IP address, passwords, security questions, and more.

Gender nonconforming

is an umbrella term that refers to individuals who do not express themselves in accordance with gender norms.

Grooming

refers to the process of an adult establishing an emotional relationship with a minor for the purpose of sexual abuse. Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ activists often misuse this term to vilify 2SLGBTQIA+ people who interact with children, such as drag performers who host drag queen story time.

Intersex

is an umbrella term that refers to a variety of conditions in which an individual has sexual characteristics that do not fit within the male/female sex binary.

Lateral violence

is a form of interpersonal violence that occurs between individuals within marginalized communities.

Misinformation

is false or inaccurate information that is spread, regardless of intent.

Nonbinary

is an umbrella term that refers to individuals who do not identify within the gender binary.

Online hate

is content posted and shared online that is rooted in hatred of a group based on their race, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or other marginalized identities. Online hate can be text-based (e.g., comments, posts, direct messages, emojis) and/or media-based (e.g., images, videos, animations, voice recordings), and can include incidents such as cyberbullying, cyberviolence, doxxing, swatting, and digital-to-physical violence.

Phishing

is a hacking technique in which an individual is lured into providing sensitive information, like their login credentials or banking information, to an unknown source that is posing as a personal contact or a well-known institution.

Presumed or assigned sex at birth

refers to the sex designation given to a person by a medical professional based on the individual's genitalia and other physical characteristics. The assigned sex may not align with the person's gender identity.

Swatting

is when an individual makes a phone call to emergency services with a false claim of an emergency, such as a hostage situation or bomb threat. The intention is to have the targeted person(s) or organization(s) be harassed, harmed, and/or humiliated by the police.

Systemic racism

refers to racism that is embedded in societal systems, including laws, policies, practices, beliefs, and attitudes, which disadvantage certain people based on their race. In Canada, systemic racism has resulted in white people occupying and dominating positions of power, which affords them socio-political privileges that Black people, Indigenous people, and other racialized people do not have.

Trans exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs)

identify as feminists but exclude trans people from their vision of feminism, and they often actively work to limit or revoke trans rights under the guise of protecting (cisgender) women. TERFs often target and spread hate about trans people, particularly trans women, and they sometimes use the term 'gender critical' to describe themselves.

Trans

is an umbrella term that refers to individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. This term includes, but is not limited to, people who identify as transgender, transsexual, trans women, trans men, trans feminine, trans masculine, MTF, FTM, nonbinary, agender, bigender, genderfluid, genderqueer, and culturally-specific gender identities (e.g., Two Spirit).

Transphobia

includes any negative attitudes, beliefs, and feelings (e.g., hate, contempt, disapproval, fear) or behaviours against Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and intersex people due to being trans or being perceived to be trans.

Transphobic online hate (TOH)

is an umbrella term that refers to a variety of incidents, such as cyberbullying, harassment, cyberviolence, cyberstalking, doxxing, swatting, and digital-to-physical violence, that negatively target 2STN+ people and communities.

Two Spirit (2S)

is a culturally-specific term used by some Indigenous people on Turtle Island. Two Spirit can sometimes refer to sexual orientation and at other times to gender identity, depending on the individual and/or their particular nation. It can also describe roles and responsibilities specific to different Indigenous nations that may or may not be tied to sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The term comes from the Ojibwe language and different communities may use this term or other terms to refer to this population.

White supremacy

refers to the belief that white people are inherently superior to all other races. This belief is the foundation for systemic racism in Canada.

Executive Summary

In 2024, the Open Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN) and Wisdom2Action (W2A) partnered on the development and implementation of a project entitled Digital Resilience: Addressing the Rise of Transphobic Online Hate through Community-Based Research, funded by the Digital Citizen Contribution Program. The Digital Resilience Project aims to better understand how transphobic online hate (TOH) in Canada is impacting Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary (2STN+) people in their professional work.

This report presents the findings from the research components of the Digital Resilience Project, which included an online survey and one-on-one interviews with 2STN+ professionals working for 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations.

At the beginning of the research process, an advisory committee of 2STN+ professionals was assembled. This committee provided guidance and feedback throughout the project. Before data was collected, ODLAN and Wisdom2Action received ethics approval from York University. Data collection included an online survey (with a total of 56 eligible responses) and one-on-one interviews (conducted with 12 participants). The survey consisted of 31 questions and the interviews consisted of 17 questions.

Content analysis was used to analyze the survey data, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data. Survey findings were interpreted alongside interview findings, which were then compiled and synthesized

to capture overlapping topics, trends, and themes. The combined findings are organized into three sections:

- Experiences of Transphobic Online Hate
- Impacts of Transphobic Online Hate
- Responses to Transphobic Online Hate

The findings shed light on the prevalence and impacts of TOH against 2STN+ professionals and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations. For example, 80% of survey respondents (out of 56 total) reported that they or their organization had experienced TOH. The findings also revealed that increased levels of TOH were often precipitated by the promotion or discussion of 2STN+ inclusion and events, or when 2STN+ issues were being discussed in the media. TOH manifested via social media, emails, and conservative websites such as blogs and newsletters. TOH largely targeted 2STN+ communities, as well as organizations and their members. The most frequently reported perceived rationales for TOH included ‘protecting children,’ ‘parental rights,’ religious and cultural beliefs, and a rejection of ‘gender ideology.’

Participants experienced TOH in their personal and professional online presence, including on social media platforms. In response, they reduced and/or limited their presence on social media, reduced the amount of personal information they shared online, and reported increased vigilance online. Participants also reported negative impacts on their mental health, including anxiety and complex PTSD (C-PTSD). Strategies for coping with TOH included seeking social support

and accessing organizational resources. Responses to TOH primarily focused on the policies and strategies that organizations have implemented to mitigate and address TOH, as well as barriers organizations have faced. Some responses included monitoring for TOH, blocking accounts that share TOH, deleting TOH, and reporting TOH on social media platforms. Other responses included limiting identifiable information about employees online, and providing employees with resources when they experienced TOH.

The findings also revealed strategies and policies that participants desired from their organizations, such as clear policies for TOH, protocols for mitigating and responding to TOH, and mental health support and other resources to address the impacts of TOH. Some of the anticipated barriers to implementing these desired approaches were inadequate investment from organizations and insufficient resources, such as funds, capacity, and in-house knowledge. Structural issues such as insufficient social media policies and discriminatory police practices were also identified as potential barriers.

Based on the findings, a set of recommendations for mitigating and addressing TOH was developed for 2SLGBTQIA+ community organizations, which are summarized below:

- Develop and implement formal policies, including anti-discrimination and sexual harassment policies, privacy policies, and social media and online hate policies.
- Engage in frequent and consistent communication of the policies,

strategies, and supports provided by the organization.

- Provide all members of the organization with training and resources on topics related to TOH, such as how to mitigate and respond to TOH, how to promote digital safety and online security, how to support victims of TOH, and how to be sensitive to 2STN+ people's experiences with harm.
- Provide resources and support for 2STN+ members impacted by TOH, including access to mental health supports.
- Partner with other organizations to provide additional support for marginalized members, especially if adequate support cannot be provided internally.
- Create a safety plan for in-person and online events, activities, etc. hosted by the organization to ensure everyone is prepared to address TOH if, or when, it happens.

There were limitations to this research, including it not being able to capture the full extent of experiences and diversity amongst 2STN+ professionals and organizations, nor the full extent of the forms of TOH and its impacts. Despite these limitations, this research highlights the urgent need for future research and interventions in this area that investigate and address the ways in which 2STN+ professionals and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations experience online hate.

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Introduction

Overview of Project

In 2024, the Open Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN) and Wisdom2Action (W2A) partnered on the development and implementation of a project entitled Digital Resilience: Addressing the Rise of Transphobic Online Hate through Community-Based Research, funded by the Digital Citizen Contribution Program. The Digital Resilience Project builds on a previous collaboration between the two organizations in 2023 that resulted in the report “The Internet isn’t all Rainbows: Exposing and Mitigating Online Queerphobic Hate Against 2SLGBTQ+ Organizations.” The report can be found at odlan.ca/research-report-2023 and www.wisdom2action.org/onlinehate.

The Digital Resilience Project aims to better understand Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary (2STN+) peoples’ professional experiences with transphobic online hate (TOH) in Canada. This project includes several research and community-focused components including:

- An online survey and one-on-one interviews with 2STN+ professionals, who were asked about their experiences with TOH and their organizations’ strategies and policies for mitigating and addressing TOH
- A 2STN+ Research Advisory Committee that provided community input
- An online peer support group

for 2STN+ professionals who experienced TOH

- A feasibility study on the development of a tool for tracking and reporting anti-2SLGBTQIA+ online hate

This report presents the findings from the online survey and the one-on-one interviews, and it offers recommendations that organizations can use for mitigating and addressing TOH.

Open Digital Literacy and Access Network

The mission of the Open Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN), formerly known as the Ontario Digital Literacy and Access Network, is to address the challenges that Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) communities experience with digital literacy and access barriers. ODLAN is an action-based initiative that proposes tangible solutions that service providers can easily integrate into their digital strategies to ensure 2SLGBTQIA+ communities can participate in the digital world confidently and safely. We empower service providers with the resources, tools, and knowledge needed to build digital strategies that use an intergenerational, intersectional, and inclusive-2SLGBTQIA+ approach and remove digital access barriers to virtual programs and related services. Additionally, we support collaborative work efforts by connecting network partners with similar mandates, directly assisting with capacity building. For more information about ODLAN, visit: odlan.ca.

Wisdom2Action Consulting Ltd.

Wisdom2Action Consulting Ltd. (Wisdom2Action or W2A) is a consulting firm with a social enterprise commitment that works with nonprofit and governmental organizations as well as other businesses to facilitate positive change and strengthen communities in gender justice, 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion, children's rights, youth engagement, mental health and substance use. W2A was founded in 2011 as the Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts Network (CYCC) at Dalhousie University through the federal government's Networks of Centres of Excellence Knowledge Mobilization program. It operated as CYCC until 2018, when it then became Wisdom2Action. W2A's work has evolved over the years, having initially focused on youth mental health. It provides a wide range of services including: research and knowledge mobilization, capacity building and organizational development, and community and stakeholder engagement. For more information visit: www.wisdom2action.org.

Literature Review

Online Hate

Online hate has risen in Canada over the past decade (Balintec, 2021). Online hate is an umbrella term that includes incidents such as cyberbullying and harassment, cyberviolence, cyberstalking, doxing, swatting, and digital-to-physical violence (Jonsson et al., 2023). Though it can be difficult to estimate how many people become victims of online hate because of its anonymous nature (Gladu, 2017; Mkhize et al., 2020), available reports suggest that 10% of Canadians have been subject to online hate, and approximately two-thirds have witnessed online hate (Lockhart et al., 2024).

Online hate thrives on social media platforms because of users' ability to reach wider audiences (Brisson-Boivin, 2019; Lupu et al., 2023; Samara Centre for Democracy, 2024). Online hate is commonly directed toward more visible targets, including cause-centred organizations and people with marginalized identities (GLAAD, 2024; Jaffray, 2020; Evelyn et al., 2022; Jonsson et al., 2023; JusticeTrans, 2024). Racialized, disabled, and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ people experience online hate at disproportionately higher rates than non-marginalized Canadians (Abacus Data, 2021; Lockhart et al., 2024; Pacheco & Melhuish, 2018; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2024). Federal data shows that the highest proportion of online hate victims are gender minorities, and men make up

the highest proportion of perpetrators (Gladu, 2017; Bailey & Mathen, 2019).

Online hate can result in negative psychological and emotional impacts, as well as social alienation, isolation, and feelings of powerlessness (Duggan, 2017; Brisson-Boivin, 2019; Jonsson et al., 2023; Nyman & Provozin, 2019). In reaction to forms of online hate which breach a user's privacy or expose personal details, victims may experience feelings of intimidation and restricted personal agency (Gladu, 2017; Bailey & Mathen, 2019). As online hate becomes more common, hateful rhetorics can be normalized and condoned by individuals and society (Brisson-Boivin, 2019; Lupu et al., 2023; Samara Centre for Democracy, 2024).

Transphobic Online Hate

Trans¹ people, who make up an estimated 0.5% of Canada's population (Jaffray, 2018), experience higher rates of online hate and more extreme harms than the rest of the population (Powell et al., 2020; Evelyn et al., 2022; Jaffray, 2020; Jonsson et al., 2023; JusticeTrans, 2024). For example, trans people who experience online hate have reported intensified feelings of dejection, shame, and inferiority after exposure to online transphobia, causing them to withdraw from their online and in-person social communities (Keighley, 2021; Evelyn et al., 2022). Victims of TOH are not always able to access online spaces or resources, which can intensify the

¹ We use the term trans throughout the literature review as this is the language most commonly used within the literature.

existing in-person challenges and risks of transphobic discrimination and violence (Jaffray, 2020; Li et al., 2023).

TOH is often directed toward 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, as well as trans people who are queer, feminized, racialized, and/or disabled (Evelyn et al., 2022; Jonsson et al., 2023; JusticeTrans, 2024). TOH comes in many forms, including slurs, intentional misgendering and/or denial of someone's gender identity, appearance-based insults, and sexual harassment (Jaffray, 2020; Evelyn et al., 2022; Jonsson et al., 2023). Transphobic threats, primarily sent through emails and social media, impact the operations of 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and other institutions that promote, or have been assumed to promote, queer and trans-inclusive programming (Cyberscout, 2024; GLAAD, 2024; Jonsson et al., 2023; Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2023b).

For example, TransCare+, an online resource centre for trans people in Canada, experienced a hate-driven phishing attack which breached the nonprofit's banking information, as well as employees' Google, Monday.com, and Slack accounts (Cyberscout, 2024). As a result, the attackers made financial transactions costing the organization more than \$50,000. The attack also included a harassment campaign led by the hackers that resulted in TransCare+ facilitators receiving hateful emails and letters—including death threats (TransCare+, 2024). Unfortunately, in March 2025, TransCare+ announced their dissolution after having "significant trouble recovering" from this cyberattack (TransCare+, 2025). The closure of TransCare+ demonstrates the very real impact that TOH can have on

individuals and organizations.

Online hate targeting trans-centred organizations can limit individuals' access to affirming community healthcare, and wellbeing services. Queer and trans people who work in organizations who serve 2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians have described online hate as a challenge that staff are often not equipped to comprehensively manage and an obstacle that impedes their ability to serve their clients (Public Policy Forum, 2019; Jonsson et al., 2023).

In recent years, changes to social media platforms' content moderation policies have aided in the spread of anti-trans hate speech and misinformation (The Associated Press, 2023; X Safety, 2023; Novak, 2023; Meta, 2025; Kaplan, 2025). Moreover, TOH is easily espoused by online communities, such as "influencer" communities or groups of users who follow a popular individual or organization, who post anti-trans content that marginalizes and threatens the safety, autonomy, and democratic rights of trans people (Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2022a).

Anti-trans movements can contribute to TOH. For example, 'parental rights' advocates mobilize transphobic rhetoric online to incite moral panic around trans people and 'gender ideology' (GLAAD, 2024; Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2023a). Similarly, movements that are 'gender critical' or subscribe to anti-trans feminist views (also referred to as trans-exclusionary radical feminists, or TERFs) often position trans women as threats to cisgender women's safety (JusticeTrans, 2024; Jonsson et al., 2023; Bassi & LaFleur, 2022).

TOH can also be linked to wider movements that regularly express transphobic sentiments and encourage online and offline violence (Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2022a; Tunney, 2024). Online hate against trans people or trans-centred organizations has been tied to white supremacist and white nationalist groups (GLAAD, 2024; Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2023a; Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2022a), and racialized trans people and allies have frequently been targeted by racist symbols and speech in addition to their experiences of TOH (JusticeTrans, 2024).

At the time of writing this report, there are limited resources available for 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations in Canada seeking to prevent online hate and mitigate its resulting harms (Jonsson et al., 2023; Egale, 2024b). Current literature has yet to comprehensively capture the overall state and personal experiences of online hate against trans professionals in Canada and provide recommendations and tools for mitigating and addressing its harms.

Methodology

The purpose of this research project was to better understand how TOH is directed at organizations that serve 2STN+ and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ populations in Canada and how TOH impacts 2STN+ staff.

The project consisted of an online survey and one-on-one interviews with 2STN+ professionals. The objectives of this project were:

- To determine how TOH impacts 2STN+ professionals
- To uncover the strategies that 2STN+ professionals and/or their organizations use to mitigate and respond to TOH
- To develop recommendations for organizations to address TOH

Before conducting the research, a research advisory committee of 2STN+ community professionals was established to provide guidance, offer feedback, and overall help ensure the project was responsive to 2STN+ community needs and perspectives. Assembled in May 2024 and concluded in February 2025, the Committee was composed of six 2STN+ community professionals (e.g., nonprofit workers, advocates, board members, and others who work for organizations that serve 2STN+ and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ communities). The Committee provided feedback on the research ethics application and the development of research questions for the online survey and one-on-one interviews. The Committee shared the recruitment materials for the online survey and one-on-one interviews through their respective networks. Following data

collection, the Committee provided guidance on the recommendations that are included in this report.

This project received ethics approval from York University.

Methods

Online Survey

Recruitment for survey respondents was conducted from October to November 2024. We used three methods to recruit potential survey respondents. First, we recruited through ODLAN's and W2A's networks, which includes 2SLGBTQIA+ community organizations and affiliated organizations. Second, we used snowball sampling that involved reaching out to people who are familiar with the project and asking them to share our call for participants with their networks. Third, we posted an open call for participants on ODLAN's and W2A's social media accounts. Recruitment materials are included in Appendix A.

Before consenting to take the survey, respondents were asked to confirm their eligibility based on the following criteria:

- Identify as 2STN+
- Be aged 18 years of age or older
- Work for a Canadian organization that serves 2STN+ and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ communities

Eligible respondents then provided their consent to participate in the survey.

The online survey was administered from October to November 2024 on SurveyMonkey. The survey took an average of approximately 17 minutes

to complete. The survey included 31 questions and was organized into three sections: incidences of TOH; resources, policies, and strategies; and impacts of TOH (see Appendix B). At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C).

Within 24 hours of launching the survey, we received 1491 responses, which raised concern regarding the legitimacy of the responses since this number seemed unusually high based on our narrow eligibility criteria and the short time that the survey had been open. We relaunched the survey with measures in place to prevent bots and repeat responders and to mitigate potentially illegitimate responses. These measures included requiring a password to access the survey, asking the same question twice in the survey to verify that the responses match, and having attention check and trap questions where respondents were asked to select a specific response.

After data collection and prior to analysis, data were cleaned to remove ineligible and illegitimate responses. To determine legitimacy, we checked survey responses to verify their location inside Canada (via the respondent's IP address), their email addresses, and potential contradictions in the participant's demographic information. Suspicious responses were flagged and reviewed to determine whether the data would be included for analysis. We received a total of 56 valid responses, 47 of which were complete and 9 of which provided partial responses. The survey used skip logic, which means that a respondent's answer to a question

determined which question they were asked next. Respondents also had the option of skipping questions that they did not want to answer.

Due to the use of skip logic and the option to skip questions, the number of responses to each question varies. Percentages provided in the Findings section are representative of the total number of people who responded to each question. For example, if we say that "80% of survey respondents (out of 56 total) experienced TOH," this means that 80% of 56 respondents experienced TOH, which is equal to 45 respondents.

Survey respondents had the choice to be entered into a draw to win one of ten \$40 gift cards where the odds of winning were approximately 1 in 5.

One-on-One Interviews

The recruitment methods for the interviews were identical to those used for the survey, with recruitment occurring simultaneously via the same methods. The survey also served as a recruitment tool for the interviews, as respondents who indicated they had experienced TOH were invited to participate in a one-on-one interview, if they were eligible and interested.

Potential participants were asked to first complete a five-minute screening call, which they registered for through an online form. The screening call allowed us to assess people's motivations for participating in the project (e.g., filter out potential 'bad' actors) and confirm participants' eligibility against the following criteria:

- Identify as 2STN+
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Work for a Canadian organization that serves 2STN+ and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ communities
- Have experienced TOH in a professional context

This last criterion was an eligibility requirement for the interviews but not for the survey.

Once their eligibility was confirmed, participants completed a one-on-one interview with a project team member. Interviews were conducted online from October to November 2024, and concluded once the target of 12 participants was reached. There were 10 interviews held on Zoom and each lasted approximately 60 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, which were then anonymized with identifying information removed. Two participants preferred to submit responses in writing and answered the questions via email. Their data were similarly anonymized with identifying information removed prior to analysis.

Each interview included 17 questions, which addressed three topics: the landscape of TOH; policies and strategies addressing TOH; and the impacts of TOH (see Appendix D). Participation was voluntary, and interviewees could skip questions or end the interview whenever they wished. Only one participant chose not to respond to all the interview questions. All participants completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C).

All interview participants received a \$120 honorarium for their participation.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Content analysis is a research method used to systematically analyze data and identify patterns, themes, and meaning. We began this process by cleaning the survey data and separating the qualitative and quantitative responses. Two researchers worked in consultation to develop a coding system, and then one researcher systematically analyzed the data using manual coding. Qualitative data were interpreted by examining the meanings embedded in respondents' survey answers. Quantitative data were analyzed by counting respondents' survey answers and identifying trends. Findings were then interpreted to draw conclusions about TOH, such as prevalence and impacts.

Thematic analysis was conducted to interpret the interview findings. Thematic analysis is a research method used to identify, analyze, and interpret themes within a set of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To begin, we anonymized the interview transcripts. Next, the transcripts were reviewed and coded by one researcher who worked in consultation with another researcher to identify recurring and/or significant comments, experiences, and ideas across the dataset. This process of reviewing and coding occurred through an interactive process of three rounds, after which the coded data were reviewed by the two researchers to develop an initial set of eight themes. Additional analysis and consultation between the researchers resulted in six themes, which were refined and finalized. Throughout data

analysis, special attention was paid to intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989).

Lastly, survey findings were compared with interview findings, which were then compiled and synthesized to capture overlapping topics, trends, and themes. The combined findings are presented in this report.

Demographic Information

Demographic information was collected from survey respondents and interview

participants. These questions were asked at the end of the survey and the interviews. Since these questions were voluntary, not everyone who participated in the research provided their demographic information. Notably, this happened with the survey, where only 47 respondents (out of the 56 total) answered the demographic questions. Table 1 shows the demographic information of survey respondents and interview participants.

Table 1			
Demographic category	Response	Survey Respondents (N = 47)	Interview Participants (N = 12)
Age range	18-29	19	4
	30-54	24	8
	55-74	4	0
Gender (select all that apply)	Two Spirit	2	1
	Trans or transgender	35	11
	Nonbinary	25	4
	Gender nonconforming	17	6
	Gender diverse	13	4
	Intersex	2	0

Demographic category	Response	Survey Respondents (N =47)	Interview Participants (N = 12)
Presumed or assigned sex at birth	Female	37	11
	Male	7	1
	Intersex	0	0
	Prefer not to say	3	0
Community size	Large urban population centre (100,000+)	33	10
	Small or medium population centre (10,000-99,999)	9	2
	Rural (below 10,000)	4	0
Geopolitical region	British Columbia	6	1
	Maritimes	2	1
	Ontario	30	7
	Prairies	7	2
	Quebec	1	0
	Territories	1	0
	Prefer not to say	0	1
Race and ethnicity	BIPOC	12	7
	White	28	4
	Prefer not to say	7	0

Demographic category	Response	Survey Respondents (N =47)	Interview Participants (N = 12)
First Nations, Metis, or Inuit?	Yes	3	3
	No	41	9
	Prefer not to say	3	0
Disability	Has a disability	32	7
	No disability	9	2
	Unsure	5	3
	Prefer not to say	1	0
Employer	Nonprofit organization	35	9
	For profit business or corporation	4	0
	Government agency	3	0
	Self-employed	5	1
	Other	1	1
	Prefer not to say	0	1

Findings

This section presents the findings from our analysis of the survey data and the interview data, which together reflect overarching patterns as well as overlaps in topics, trends, and themes.

The findings are organized into three subsections:

1. Experiences of Transphobic Online Hate
2. Impacts of Transphobic Online Hate
3. Responses to Transphobic Online Hate

Though data from the survey and interviews were compiled and analyzed against one another to explore where data aligned and diverged, the survey data and the interview data are presented separately to make it clear which findings came from which part of the research. Together, these findings respond to this project's overarching research questions about the impacts of TOH on 2STN+ professionals, the organizations they work for, and the strategies they have used to address it.

1. Experiences of Transphobic Online Hate

Forms of Transphobic Online Hate

Survey Data

Survey respondents were asked to describe in a few sentences the TOH that they and their organization had experienced. Several respondents reported receiving online hate on social media, including posted comments and direct messages, and by email. Some respondents reported encountering transphobic hate on conservative media platforms. One respondent shared that their organization was targeted by a hate-motivated cyber-attack that included the theft of funds. This incident demonstrates the sophistication of anti-trans hate actors and the threat that TOH poses to an organization's intellectual property, proprietary information, and financial security.

The descriptions of TOH experienced by organizations included:

- Being accused of predatory sexual behaviour toward children (e.g., pedophilia, grooming)
- Being accused of indoctrinating children
- Transphobic and homophobic slurs
- Threats of violence (e.g., bomb threats, death threats)

- Intentional misgendering
- Being told they are mentally ill
- Hate based in conservative and right-wing political views
- Religious hate (e.g., being called a “sinner,” being told they are going to hell)
- Spreading of misinformation or disinformation about 2STN+ and 2SLGBTQIA+ people
- Other forms of hate speech, including racism, ableism, and homophobia
- Cyber-attack resulting in theft of funds

The most prevalent examples of TOH provided by respondents were accusations of pedophilia and grooming, hateful comments including transphobic slurs, and threats of violence including death threats.

Interview Data

Interview participants reported that TOH was most often received in the form of comments on social media. These comments included intentional misgendering of individuals to invalidate their gender identity, transphobic sentiments in the form of misinformation and religious-based shaming (e.g., accusing organizations of ‘creating’ trans people), inappropriate and offensive questions, and challenging or devaluing trans-inclusive programming or services. Participants categorized inappropriate or offensive questions in two distinct ways: those intended to be overtly transphobic and harmful, and those arising from genuine curiosity but expressed in a problematic

or insensitive manner.

“We have received many emails and comments in regards to trans people and those under the trans umbrella, either [not] deserving a space within the LGBT community, or that we are encouraging people to go against their, to use their quotes, ‘God given nature.’”

- Interview participant

Interview participants shared other forms of TOH that they had experienced, such as their organizations being discussed in transphobic newsletters, blogs, and other online platforms. Doxing and other forms of digital-to-physical violence were also reported by participants, though in small numbers, including one instance where an individual was doxxed within an organization, and two instances of organizations receiving bomb threats to their offices.

Prevalence and Primary Targets

Survey Data

80% of survey respondents (out of 56 total) reported experiencing TOH directed at them or their organization, while 20% of respondents said they experienced none at all. 43% of respondents indicated that they had personally experienced TOH as an employee of the organization (see Figure 1).

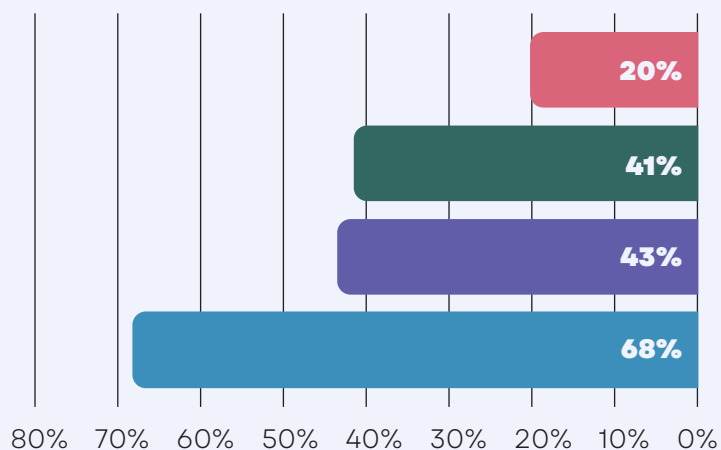
Respondents who had not experienced TOH were asked why they thought they had not received TOH. They reasoned that this was because the organization

and/or employees were not client-facing, did not offer 2STN+ focused services, and did not have social media accounts. Respondents also thought that online hate was directed at other issues or initiatives (e.g., safe consumption site, workers' rights), and that their organization employed successful mitigation strategies against TOH, such as limiting responses on X (Twitter) and keeping a log of hateful incidents.

Among the respondents who reported that their organization had not experienced TOH, 64% (out of 11 total) were worried about receiving TOH.

Figure 1.

Has your organization (including individual employees) experienced transphobic online hate from groups or individuals? (select all that apply)



Yes, the organization has received transphobic hate online

Yes, I have, as an employee of the organization, received transphobic online hate

Yes, other employees of the organization received transphobic online hate

No, the organization has not received transphobic online hate

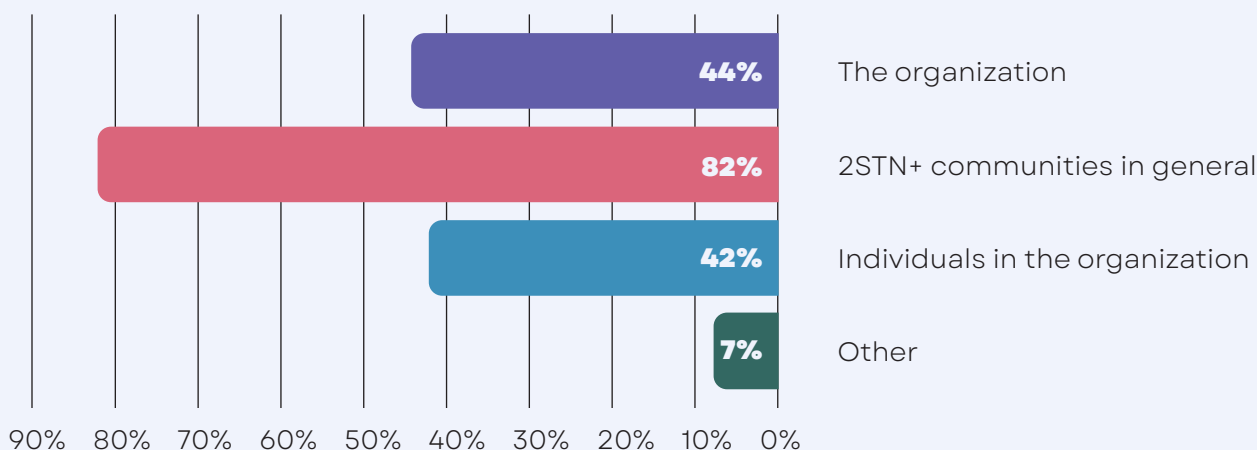
Survey respondents were asked who the most hateful comments were directed at. 82% of survey respondents (out of 45 total) said the hate was against the 2STN+ community in general, 44% said the organization, and 42% said individuals in the organization (see Figure 2). Respondents who selected “Other” shared that TOH was directed at 2STN+ people who identify as nonbinary or other nonconforming gender identities.

that TOH was targeted at individuals in the organization, usually those in visible leadership positions, such as executive directors. TOH was also sometimes directed at individuals associated with the organization.

Interview Data

Similarly, interview participants reported that TOH was most often directed at their organization or at 2STN+ communities as a whole. To a lesser degree, they said

Figure 2. Are most of the hateful comments directed at: (select all that apply)



Precipitating Events and Contributing Factors

and counter-protests; shared content featuring or about 2STN+ people on social media; and shared or posted about 2STN+ events.

Survey Data

Survey respondents were asked the question: “What, if anything, were preceding events that may have contributed to the TOH their organization experienced?” Their responses are shown in Table 2.

Survey respondents also reported receiving TOH when they made statements of support for other political causes, including elections, anti-2STN+ protests (e.g., 1 Million March 4 Children)

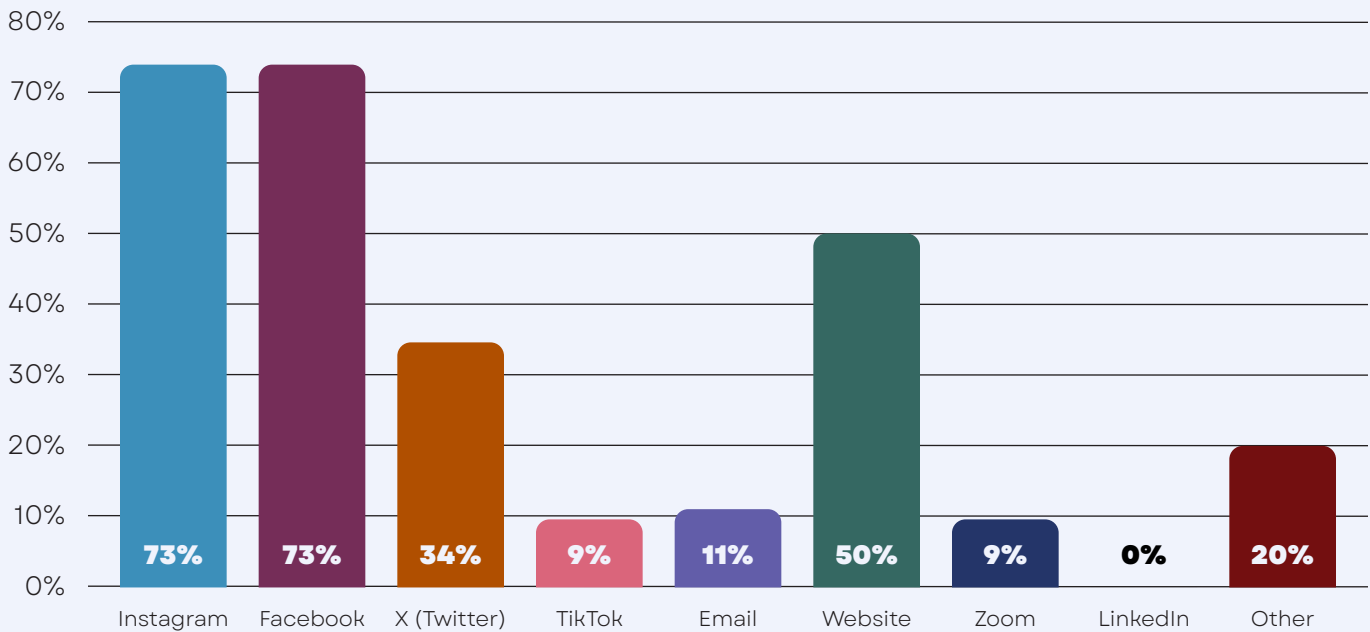
Interview Data

Interview participants shared similar responses when they were asked to explain what preceded incidents of TOH. Notably, organizations would be targeted by TOH when they shared or promoted content about or for 2STN+ people, such as 2STN+ inclusive programming or 2STN+ events. Organizations also experienced TOH when they were mentioned in transphobic social media posts, drawing negative attention towards their organization and work.

Table 2

Precipitative Event	Percentage (N = 45)
Statements made in support of 2STN+ communities	67%
Increased visibility (e.g., boosted or shared posts)	64%
Days of significance (e.g., Transgender Day of Visibility)	51%
Discussions of 2STN+ communities or issues in the news and media	51%
Changes to policies and/or laws (e.g., court decisions, legislation)	36%
Posts by transphobic influencers, politicians, celebrities, etc.	24%

Figure 3. On which platforms or online avenues has this hate occurred? (select all that apply)



Sites of Transphobic Online Hate

Survey Data

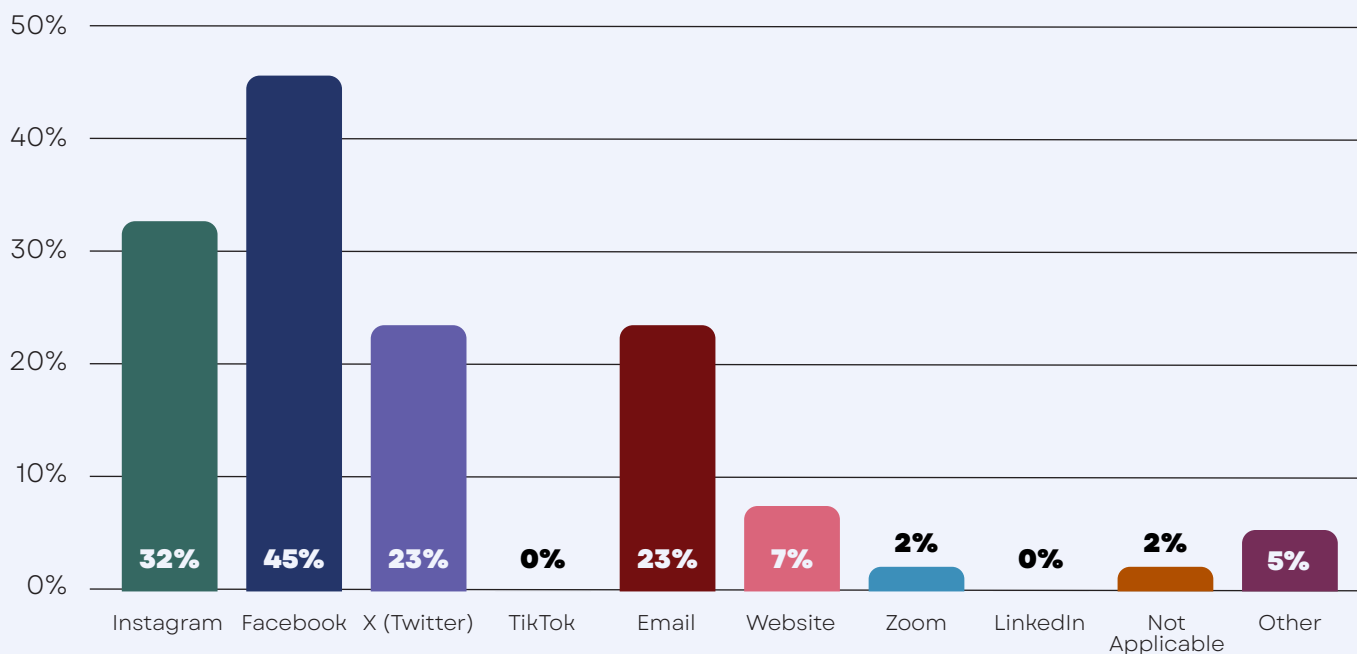
Survey respondents reported that Facebook and Instagram, both owned by Meta, were the platforms where most incidents of TOH occurred. Although X (Twitter)² was not identified as one of the platforms with the most TOH, 52% of respondents (out of 42 total) said that their organization did not use X (Twitter),

due to heightened transphobia. This may explain why reported rates of TOH were lower on X (Twitter) than Instagram and Facebook for survey respondents. Some respondents said that they tried to avoid using Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, Zoom, and email because of concerns about TOH.

In Figure 4, the respondents who selected “Other” reported that they received TOH on platforms like YouTube and Snapchat, and in responses to online surveys conducted by the organization. Organizations were also targeted on

² We refer to the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, as “X (Twitter)” for clarity.

Figure 4. Is there a particular platform on which your organization has received the most hate?



third-party anti-trans websites (e.g., Action4Canada, Hands Off Our Children, 1 Million March 4 Children).

Respondents reported receiving online hate through letters, text messages, and phone calls. They also reported that threats of violence, including bomb threats, had been made against their organizations and that threats were also sent to local libraries and local news media.

Interview Data

Among interview participants, there were similar findings that individuals and organizations most commonly experienced TOH on social media platforms. There

was clear agreement among interview participants that X (Twitter) was the platform where organizations were most likely to receive TOH. Some participants identified Elon Musk’s acquisition of X (Twitter) as a significant factor in influencing the frequency and intensity of TOH on the platform. Like survey respondents, many interview participants shared that their organizations had deliberately chosen to leave or avoid using X (Twitter) as a result.

Instagram was the second most common site of TOH reported by participants, likely due to it being more commonly used by the participants’ organizations. However, some participants described it as safer than X (Twitter) due to the platform’s algorithm

limiting their exposure to those outside of their community. Facebook was the third most common platform for TOH, with slightly fewer organizations using it. Some participants attributed hate on Facebook to the large presence of older users. Participants also reported experiencing TOH via email, though participants noted that it was less frequent than on social media channels. TOH received via email often targeted organizations directly, focusing specifically on their work and mission.

Less common, though still present, were instances of TOH on platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, and Reddit, primarily in their comment sections. Hate on these platforms was reported as less frequent, perhaps due to the organizations' less frequent use of these platforms or the nature of the platforms. On LinkedIn, participants attributed the low frequency of hate to the platform's professional environment. Reddit was less commonly mentioned as a source of hate, as participants accessed niche queer and trans subreddits that served as safer spaces. Lastly, one participant reported TOH on right-wing and conservative blogs and websites explicitly designed to promote transphobic views.

Transphobic Discourses and Attributed Rationales of Hate

Survey Data

Survey respondents were asked the question: "What language have you seen being used by those creating TOH to define themselves as a group, movement, or to justify their TOH? (select all that apply)." Their responses are shown in Table 3 in the order of frequency.

Table 3

Discourse or Rationale	Percentage (N = 45)
Protecting children (or similar phrases implying protection of children from certain ideologies)	82%
Biological realism	56%
Parental rights groups	56%
Traditional or family values coalitions	56%
Gender critical movement	44%
Women's rights campaigns (when used in the context of opposing transgender inclusion in women's spaces)	44%
Free-speech advocates	44%
Protecting women's and girls' sports	42%
Radical feminist groups that are anti-transgender (e.g., TERFs)	42%
Anti-gender movement	38%
Sex-based rights	33%
Fairness in sports	33%
LGB Alliance (used to exclude the "T" from LGBT)	27%
Other	16%

The most common rationale attributed by survey respondents was 'protecting children' or similar language and discourses, including conservative coalitions and 'parental rights' groups that espoused 'traditional family values.' Another common rationale was biological determinism, often coming from 'gender critical' movements,

including TERFs. For respondents who selected "Other," they identified anti-trans groups such as religious organizations, Common Sense Conservatives, and 1 Million March 4 Children. They also talked about 'anti-woke' movements and receiving lateral hate from within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Interview Data

The first major rationale for TOH, cited by nearly all interview participants, was rooted in cultural beliefs. Participants noted that 2STN+ identities were often perceived as clashing with cultural values and norms, resulting in hate that invalidated and ostracized 2STN+ identities and communities.

The second most common rationale was religious beliefs. Participants shared that promoting 2STN+ inclusion was viewed by some as a violation of religious rights and that expressing transphobic views was therefore exercising religious freedom. This rationale was closely tied to two other justifications: right-wing and conservative political ideologies, and the ‘parental rights’ movement. Participants noted that these rationales frequently overlapped. For instance, participants said that some individuals would claim that being transphobic was their religious right while simultaneously invoking ‘parental rights’ to protest trans-inclusive education in schools. A few participants acknowledged the role that racial and religious identities can play in TOH, pointing to a trend of Muslims being portrayed as leading the charge in transphobic movements, often justified by arguments of religious freedom and ‘parental rights.’ These participants emphasized the need to approach and address transphobia from these communities differently than transphobia rooted in similar beliefs from white Christians. While no specific strategy for addressing these forms of TOH was outlined, participants stressed the importance of an intersectional and nuanced approach to navigating transphobia across different communities.

Similarly, right-wing and conservative ideologies were seen as reinforcing and legitimizing religious beliefs that aimed to justify transphobia. These ideologies also fueled the perception that certain organizations were ‘creating’ trans people by promoting 2STN+ inclusion. This sentiment was echoed in another common rationale, described by one participant as part of a movement to end the ‘indoctrination of children.’ In this narrative, efforts to support 2STN+ inclusion in schools were mischaracterized as influencing or ‘making’ children identify as trans.

“Ending the indoctrination of our kids’ is a common phrase that we hear too. That we’re indoctrinating kids into being trans. We often hear that it’s anti-Christian or anti-Muslim or anti-faith in general, to be promoting trans inclusion, as though what we are doing is actively in opposition to these communities.”

– Interview Participant

Although less common, participants identified biological essentialism as another rationale. This perspective conflated sex and gender, invalidating 2STN+ identities by claiming that biological sex determines gender. Participants noted that this not only fueled TOH but also perpetuated misinformation by reinforcing the widely held misconception that sex and gender

are inherently the same. This biological rationale was sometimes paired with the sentiment that lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities are acceptable while 2STN+ identities are illegitimate, due to biology.

“I think we’ve been hearing way more in the last few years, conversations around ‘gay is fine,’ ‘queer is fine.’ We don’t care about that anymore, like love is love or whatever. But don’t try to pretend you are someone you aren’t. And so don’t try to tell [people] that they can just decide what their gender is, because that’s anti-science.”

– Interview Participant

Another less common rationale stemmed from TERFs. Participants reported that transphobia grounded in this rationale often targeted women’s programming that was inclusive of trans women. This was frequently expressed through emails in which cisgender women voiced disapproval of trans-inclusive initiatives, framing their opposition through transphobic remarks.

Lastly, interview participants stated that the rationale behind TOH was not always clear or coherent, with some instances described as hate spewed without any discernible reasoning.

2. Impacts of Transphobic Online Hate

Impacts of Transphobic Online Hate on 2STN+ Professionals

Survey Data

62% of survey respondents (out of 37 total) shared that their awareness of TOH and its prevalence had grown significantly compared to before they started working at their organization. This correlates with the increase in TOH that 2STN+ organizations and individuals have been facing.

Approximately 21% of respondents (out of 29 total) shared that the threat of legal pursuits, such as defamation lawsuits, has impacted how their organization responds to TOH or discusses 2STN+ issues publicly. Respondents also reported that this threat has had negative impacts on them as individuals, including worsened mental and physical health (e.g., anxiety, fear, feeling unsafe, C-PTSD, exhaustion, burnout) and diminished presence on social media. Some respondents said they increased their online security out of concerns related to TOH.

“I had people offer money for my address online. I now have cameras, am constantly aware of what and who is around me, take different routes home and keep my phone next to my bed in case I need to call 911.”

– Survey respondent

When asked what impact the threat of online hate has had on their organization, respondents reported an increase in online security, less presence on social media, greater levels of fear and anxiety among staff, high expenditure of staff time and resources, burnout, and negative impacts on service delivery.

“I am afraid of success because it means more exposure and more risk.”

– Survey respondent

Respondents were asked how professional experiences of TOH impacted their online presence in both professional and personal capacities by selecting all that apply from a list of impacts. Their responses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Impact on online presence	Professional (N = 37)	Professional (N = 37)
I have increased the privacy settings on my social media and professional networking profiles to limit visibility and control who can contact me.	59%	70%
I have become more outspoken about topics related to 2STN+ communities and online harassment.	49%	49%
I have significantly reduced my online activity, including limiting posts and interactions.	41%	46%
I have implemented enhanced security measures (e.g., two-factor authentication and stronger passwords) to protect my online accounts from hacking	41%	43%
I have modified the type of content I share online, avoiding topics that might attract harassment.	32%	27%
I do not post or include my email address or contact information.	30%	46%
I do not use or include my last name.	22%	16%
I do not post a headshot/photo of myself.	16%	8%
I use a pseudonym to protect my identity.	11%	16%
I do not have a presence on social media, including LinkedIn.	8%	11%
There has been no impact on my professional or personal online presence.	16%	14%

As a follow-up question, respondents were asked about other ways that they were impacted professionally and personally. They reported reducing their online presence and restricting online activity (e.g., not being as outspoken about 2STN+ or other issues, self-monitoring their posts); creating a safety plan due to threats or fear of digital-to-physical violence, including against family members; and having a reduced interest or motivation to engage online.

“It has made me feel like I have to consider the safety of my family when I am in such a front facing role.”

– Survey respondent

Respondents discussed other ways that their professional online presence had been impacted, which included hiring security personnel at their workplace due to threats or fear of digital-to-physical violence; no longer responding to messages; removing trans-identifiable personal information (e.g., removing gender-neutral pronouns from their resumé); removing contact information from public view (e.g., email address, phone number); and reducing professional opportunities (e.g., not engaging in professional networking or applying for jobs). They also reported fear of success leading to increased visibility.

“I worry that my public presence on my work website can make me a target of anti-trans hate. I don’t include my pronouns (they/them) on applications because I don’t want to lose out on job opportunities.”

– Survey respondent

Respondents also talked about how their online presence was impacted on a personal level. The most common were not having a personal online presence, no longer being on social media, and implementing additional privacy measures. Many respondents shared that their experiences of TOH also had negative impacts on their mental health (e.g., C-PTSD, anxiety).

“I use a pseudonym in certain online spaces. I get scared to share my name with others because there is a lot of information about me online. I am critical about who I work with.”

– Survey respondent

Lastly, one respondent shared that they were more outspoken about 2STN+ issues in response to experiencing TOH.

Interview Data

Most participants reported seeking mental health support, often through therapy, to cope with the stress and emotional toll of experiencing and/or witnessing TOH. A few participants also talked about developing resilience in response to TOH. They described how dealing with TOH for long periods of time in their personal and professional lives helped them build a ‘thick skin’ and made them more comfortable being ‘out’ on social media. This resilience was also expressed as a key factor in them being able to take on the role of addressing TOH for their organizations.

“For my professional online presence, it [TOH] just made me more resolute and more determined to know if I’ve got to be that brick wall at the front. I will be and I will protect people.”

– Interview participant

Fear and hopelessness were identified as consequences of TOH among some participants, who had changed their personal and professional online presence out of fear, even if they had not been directly targeted. Witnessing TOH directed at their organization contributed to participants’ anxiety about receiving hate themselves. Many participants expressed feelings of hopelessness about the issue, saying that TOH could not be effectively

prevented or mitigated due to the influence of social media and the lack of trust in these platforms to change.

“It [TOH] has made me hyper aware, even treading on the verge of hypervigilant unfortunately, in terms of the spaces I access online, the information that I share about myself, and just generally how I engage in online spaces.”

– Interview participant

In response to the impacts of TOH, participants developed strategies to prevent and mitigate it. Many participants restricted their personal and professional online presence as a way to avoid exposure to hate. This included using different names on their personal and professional accounts, making their social media accounts private, and sometimes avoiding symbols of their 2STN+ identity. On a professional level, some participants restricted their online presence by removing photos from their organization’s website or not listing their contact information. Self-censorship also emerged as a strategy, with some participants actively changing their behaviours by, for example, trying to present themselves in appeasing ways or not expressing their feelings of anger or frustration in online spaces.

“I think it all pushes me, forces me to be a palatable trans person where people are like, ‘Oh, you’re not angry and yelling all the time. And so I can talk to you.’”

– Interview participant

In regards to their professional online presence, participants discussed the challenges of being open about their gender identity and navigating the complexities of how ‘out’ they are on social media. While some people might not want to work with them because they are 2STN+, others may have greater trust in them and their work with 2SLGBTQIA+ communities because they are 2STN+.

Lastly, some participants expressed concerns about financial stability and job prospects. They were worried that being ‘out’ could result in less work or fewer opportunities, ultimately making it harder to meet their financial obligations.’

“I’ve had to really consider if talking about being trans is a good part of the way that I market and introduce myself to other people, because it does welcome hate, unfortunately. But I also know that there’s representation that’s really important for other trans and gender nonconforming and marginalized communities to see, that there is someone who is trans who is doing this work.”

– Interview participant

“I need to make money to pay my bills, and if I say that I am trans, is someone not going to want to essentially give me their money to work with me?”

– Interview participant

Individual Methods of Coping with Transphobic Online Hate

Interview participants explained how they coped with TOH, both within and outside of their organizations. Regarding strategies that they used in their organizations, many participants accessed employee benefits and organizational resources, particularly mental health supports, but some noted that these resources were sometimes limited. Peer support from colleagues was a service that some participants relied on, though BIPOC participants reported being less likely to seek peer support since they did not always feel comfortable receiving support from colleagues who did not share their racial identity and could not understand the nuances of their experiences. Taking time off was another coping mechanism, with several participants relying on official and unofficial policies to step away from work when they were impacted by TOH, usually with the support of organizational leadership.

Outside their organizations, participants' coping methods mostly involved seeking social support from their communities, friends, and partners. This was crucial for many participants, but especially BIPOC participants who did not feel as comfortable seeking peer support from their colleagues. Participants also prioritized their mental health by seeking therapy outside of their organizations and limiting their engagement with TOH on their personal social media accounts.

“In terms of support, I think the support is there, but whether or not I feel like... the support provided to me is going to actually be enough, I’m not sure if that’s like... the case... just because there’s not, like, a relational aspect, we don’t share very similar identities... the layers of all of this, isn’t necessarily understood by other people.”

– Interview participant

3. Responses to Transphobic Online Hate

Organizational Strategies, Resources, and Policies

Survey Data

57% of survey respondents (out of 46 total) reported that their organizations had strategies for mitigating incidents of TOH. Respondents were provided a list of nine strategies and asked to rate

the perceived effectiveness of these strategies in addressing TOH on a scale of 1 to 5, or select N/A if the strategy was not applicable. The strategies were then averaged and ranked from the most effective to the least effective, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Strategies for mitigating TOH	Perceived efficacy (out of 5)
Removal or limited sharing of identifying information of employees online	4.1
Actively monitored social media and online platforms for transphobic hate or harassment using human moderators	3.6
Partnered with other organizations or experts to stay informed on best practices and emerging threats related to TOH or harassment	3.5
Developed accessible and confidential systems for reporting incidents of online hate or harassment	3.3
Blocking and tracking the social media accounts of those who target the organization and its employees/members with TOH	3.0
Provided resources and support, including counseling and mental health services, for those affected by TOH or harassment	2.9
Conducted training on recognizing and responding to TOH or harassment	2.8
Actively monitored social media and online platforms for transphobic hate or harassment using automated tools	2.6
Utilized software tools to filter transphobic and other harmful content and protect personal information from exposure online	2

Survey respondents were asked if their organization had any other strategies or tools for mitigating or addressing incidents of TOH, beyond those listed in Table 5. Some of the strategies already being used by organizations to address TOH, included:

- Providing workshops and training on digital safety, transphobia, and online hate
- Upgrading software and online security
- Providing psychological support, including debriefing sessions following incidents of TOH, online support services, and benefits for mental health services
- Enlisting the help of HR or management
- Safety planning
- Ignoring online hate and ‘bad’ actors

Respondents were asked if there were any additional strategies or tools that they felt their organizations should provide to their staff to address TOH. Many of their ideas echoed the list above, as respondents came from different organizations where some already implemented strategies and others did not. Additional strategies or tools that respondents shared included:

- Creating an anti-trans hate toolkit (e.g., having pre-written procedures that detail how to respond to hateful comments)
- Refraining from engaging on social platforms where transphobia is common (e.g., X (Twitter))
- Consulting with researchers and

community educators

- Hiring a PR firm
- Training cisgender staff to recognize and moderate TOH

“Making clear guidelines/ processes (which necessarily includes codifying policy) would be the best way to support, as this directly intervenes with the problem. I also feel that a greater attention to care work and healing is always needed, so naming and supporting these kinds of care networks is crucial.”

– Survey respondent

Approximately 30% of respondents (out of 47 total) reported that their organizations do not have any resources or tools to address TOH. Approximately 20% of respondents (out of 40 total) said that they do not think there are any tools or resources that their organizations could provide to meaningfully address TOH. Reasons for these responses were not provided.

44% of respondents (out of 43 total) reported that their organization currently has policies for mitigating or addressing incidents of TOH, including a code of conduct, anti-hate and anti-harassment policies, procedures for reporting hate to HR or management, and preventative policies (e.g., allowing

staff to remove personal information, bios, and headshots from websites). Respondents also shared that their organizations have social media policies that explain their procedures for monitoring social media accounts, determining whether or how to respond to hate and harassment, deleting hateful comments, and reporting or blocking certain accounts. 54% of respondents (out of 24 total) shared that these policies were somewhat effective at mitigating TOH.

Interview Data

Interview participants were asked to share what strategies their organizations used to mitigate TOH, and five key strategies were identified: blocking and/or deleting TOH, reporting incidents of TOH, responding to TOH, ignoring TOH, and sharing resources.

Blocking and/or Deleting Transphobic Online Hate

The most widely used strategy to respond to TOH was blocking and/or deleting harmful comments or messages. This strategy was applied in many ways, including as a formal task assigned to someone, a written policy or procedure, or an informal approach taken up by a member of the organization. Participants found this strategy particularly effective when implemented by non-2STN+ employees, as it reduced the emotional burden on 2STN+ staff, promoted individual safety, and demonstrated a harm-reduction approach. This strategy focused not just on protecting other employees from seeing TOH, but it ensured that

the organizations' online communities would also be protected from it.

“We have really good systems [for tracking TOH]. There’s one person whose job it is to track the hate that happens, and then only sharing what is really necessary for the people to hear. I’ve heard of other organizations where it’s super common for the group social chat to be like, ‘Oh, did you see this article’ and ‘Did you see this hate at all?’ And just an onslaught that you can’t always prepare for.”

– Interview participant

Reporting Transphobic Online Hate

Reporting TOH was another strategy used by organizations, which was often a formal policy or procedure that involved documenting the TOH and reporting it to the social media platform where it occurred. Though participants also stated that reporting could include legal options or police reports, reporting to law enforcement was uncommon and typically reserved for extreme threats of physical violence. Participants said they had an average level of awareness about legal options. It was shared that one organization had a positive and collaborative relationship with their local police force. This included educating law enforcement officers

about transphobia, which increased their sensitivity to the issue and helped improve their response.

Responding to Transphobic Online Hate

Another strategy involved directly responding to comments, emails, or messages rather than immediately blocking and/or deleting them. In certain cases, individuals chose to respond directly to the aggressor with the aim of educating them. This approach was only employed when it was believed that responding would have a meaningful impact, such as when the perpetrator appeared open to learning. Participants emphasized the importance of considering intersectionality when responding, particularly when visible identity factors of the aggressor could inform a culturally sensitive response. This strategy was also contingent on the responding individual's capacity to engage with the perpetrator.

“If the person’s comment seems as though they can potentially be reasoned with with proper education, then maybe it can be a teaching moment. But if it is just vitriol and hate, that’s just getting deleted.”

– Interview participant

Ignoring Transphobic Online Hate

Ignoring TOH was another strategy, used when the content did not meet a perceived threshold of violence or direct threat. This approach was also common in organizations that lacked formal policies or strategies for addressing TOH.

Sharing Resources

Lastly, some organizations would share resources to help affected individuals or communities who had experienced TOH. Notably, in cases where Two Spirit people were targeted, organizations shared culturally-specific Two Spirit resources to provide appropriate support and care.

Policies

Organizational policies that outline resources for employees that experienced TOH were reportedly common amongst interview participants. Participants had been able to take advantage of their organization's employee benefits or flexible time-off policies to cope and recover from TOH when needed. Many participants' organizations also offered formal and informal peer support that employees could provide or receive to support one another. Access to professional development and training on digital safety and TOH was also identified as a valuable resource. Another participant said that their organization offered professional development opportunities but these had not been used for digital safety purposes.

Gaps and Limitations in Addressing Transphobic Online Hate

Interview Data

Lack of Documentation, Policies or Strategies within Organizations

Interview participants discussed organizational gaps, with one being that some organizations lacked both formal and informal policies to address TOH. This gap left the problem unresolved and unacknowledged, making participants frustrated and feeling harmed by their organizations' perceived lack of seriousness in responding to TOH. Some participants associated this neglect with tokenism, feeling that it reflected a lack of care for 2STN+ employees despite a desire to have them within their organization. Even when informal approaches existed, they were often undocumented, creating ambiguity and making it challenging for participants to access support effectively. Participants were aware of the various resources they could access, but the lack of clear guidelines from their organizations about how to move forward after experiencing TOH created a barrier to accessing available support or services. Many participants noted that discussions about policies for online hate were still in the early stages of development, while others reported these discussions were entirely absent. This overlap of informal approaches and undefined policies underscored the absence of clear organizational approaches which left 2STN+ employees vulnerable to TOH and its impacts.

“If your [work] focuses on queer and trans folks, and you hire queer and trans folks to work on those projects, it just feels completely irresponsible to not have some kind of thought process, [or] at least [seem] like you gave it a thought about how to protect folks who you know, have these lived experiences that could be targeted online if certain types of [work] go out.”

– Interview participant

Responsibility of Strategy Implementation

Another gap that participants identified within their organizations was who was responsible for blocking, deleting, and/or reporting TOH. In many cases, the burden of implementation fell on 2STN+ employees. Whether self-selected or assigned, this responsibility contributed to emotional and professional strain.

“I don’t want anyone to have to read it other than me. So I guess there’s not really anything in place to protect me, but it’s also like, I would rather do the work and have to read all the comments than have our following read them. I would just rather take the sacrifice.”

– Interview participant

Participants expressed frustration with this practice because they had to address the harm themselves. It also required resilience and often led to a sense of martyrdom where participants would sacrifice their well-being to protect their colleagues and communities. In contrast, one participant stated that their organization was aware of the harm this could cause, which is why non-2STN+ employees were assigned to deal with incidents of TOH.

Reporting to Social Media Platforms

Another gap that participants identified was tied to reporting instances of TOH to social media platforms. Most participants found reporting to social media platforms ineffective, as they found it rarely resulted in meaningful consequences for perpetrators. This perceived ineffectiveness, coupled with a lack of transparency in the reporting process, led some participants to only report the most extreme cases of TOH.

“We have, in the past, reported it [TOH] to Facebook or Twitter or whatever. I don’t really do it so much these days, because usually it doesn’t get any kind of response that makes a change other than directly blocking the person. I can do that myself.”

– Interview participant

Others continued to report as part of their strategy for mitigating TOH,

despite believing it to be largely futile. Several participants noted that social media platforms would often respond to reported incidents of TOH by blocking the individual from the organization’s social media—a practice already implemented by the organizations themselves.

Reporting to the Legal System

Interview participants widely regarded reporting TOH to law enforcement or pursuing legal action as harmful and ineffective. This sentiment was particularly present among BIPOC 2STN+ participants. One BIPOC participant stressed the history of systemic oppression against racialized, queer, and 2STN+ communities within policing and the legal system. This participant also emphasized the historical and ongoing discrimination embedded in legal systems as a reason to avoid engaging with law enforcement, including the likelihood of experiencing trauma and the fear that their concerns would not be taken seriously.

“Historically, the justice system, cops, etc., they’ve been used to oppress marginalized communities. And so, if there’s legal options, that’s great, but at the end of the day, am I gonna put so much time into legally reporting something or like having a lawyer? And is the system going to continue to not work for me or with me?”

– Interview participant

Another BIPOC participant echoed this sentiment, sharing that they would not pursue legal action if they could avoid it, since the legal system could cause them more harm than the initial incident of TOH. Building on these concerns, two other participants reported experiences of police incompetence in situations where the police failed to adequately respond to bomb threats against their organization. For these participants, this reinforced their frustrations with law enforcement and further eroded their trust in the legal system.

Desired Responses to Transphobic Online Hate

Survey Data

Survey respondents were asked what policy changes their organization could make to provide staff or community members with the support they need when experiencing TOH.

Respondents provided the following recommendations:

- Create policies specific to TOH
- Establish clear protocols and/or guidelines for how to respond to and mitigate TOH, including pre-written responses
- Increase access to mental health support for impacted staff, as well as personal support
- Provide training on how to recognize, mitigate, and respond to TOH, as well as general sensitivity training

- Create a response strategy for the team or organization
- Track and/or document incidents of TOH
- Provide additional resources and information on TOH and misinformation, and facilitate access to locally-available resources for 2STN+ folks
- Increase monitoring of social media accounts, including:
 - Automated account monitoring that hides or removes transphobic hate
 - A dedicated communications person
 - A cisgender staff member who would be responsible for monitoring and addressing incidents of TOH (i.e., to avoid additional harm to 2STN+ staff)

Respondents were asked whether any barriers existed that were preventing these policies from being implemented. The most common barriers that participants reported were a lack of funding, a lack of resources (including knowledge and expertise in online hate and digital safety), and a limited capacity within the organization due to lack of staff and/or time constraints. Other barriers included an unwillingness or lack of investment from the organization or team members and transphobia within the organization or among team members.

Interview Data

Interview participants were asked about the policies and strategies they wanted to see implemented and possible barriers that could impede their implementation. Many participants emphasized the importance of formal written policies that are clearly communicated and regularly revisited. They recommended the following policy improvements:

- Detail both formal and informal sources of support and resources
- Reduce the emotional burden on 2STN+ employees by streamlining access to support
- Include expert-led training on navigating, addressing, and mitigating TOH
- Incorporate harm-reduction approaches, such as limiting or

turning off comments on social media and using filtering tools to block harmful language

- Establish formalized reporting mechanisms, such as a Google form that connects employees to relevant resources after a report is filed

Participants also suggested appointing dedicated staff to support colleagues dealing with TOH. This role would involve providing peer support, linking employees to resources, and sharing the emotional burden of navigating TOH. Improved access to tailored mental health support, such as in-house counselors familiar with the challenges of TOH, was also highlighted as a critical need. Participants stated that there were several barriers that may prevent organizations from adopting desired policies and strategies, which are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6

Resource constraints	Limited funding, organizational capacity, and access to qualified professionals, particularly counselors with expertise in 2SLGBTQIA+ issues.
Leadership and governance	Boards and leadership who may lack interest, awareness, or understanding of TOH as a legitimate form of harm. Focus is often on physical threats rather than online harms. A culture of silence may discourage individuals or organizations from addressing TOH openly, out of fear of internal and/or external repercussions.
Limits on preventative measures	Measures like making accounts private or limiting comments may reduce organizational reach and visibility. Strategies are often reactive due to social media platforms' failure to provide preventive measures, enforce content moderation, or hold perpetrators accountable.

Participants called for social media platforms to adopt stronger preventive measures, such as tools that filter and delete TOH quickly or prevent them from being posted. They also talked about more robust responses to users' reports of TOH, going beyond blocking to enforce meaningful consequences that are transparently communicated to those filing the report.

Participants identified that a significant barrier to implementing changes to social media platforms is that these changes depend on the leadership behind the social media platforms. If those running the social media do not see a need to adopt these tools, they will not be adopted and, in some cases, social media platforms and their leadership may prioritize values that align with or tolerate TOH. For example, platforms like X (Twitter) were cited as unlikely to adopt effective policies due to their perceived alignment with TOH rhetoric.

Participants also discussed how systemic issues within law enforcement present significant barriers. Historical mistreatment of 2SLGBTQIA+ and racialized communities has eroded trust, making participants hesitant to report TOH. Structural changes are needed to address these longstanding issues and improve law enforcement responses as well as build trust with BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Lastly, interview participants expressed a need for law enforcement to take TOH related threats, such as doxxing or digital-to-physical violence, more seriously.

Discussion

Findings from this project highlighted the prevalence of TOH and the negative impacts of TOH on 2STN+ professionals and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations. The findings also revealed the lack of resources available to 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and 2STN+ staff who encounter TOH. Given the limited research on 2STN+ professionals' experiences with TOH and its impacts, these findings provide valuable insights for 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations in mitigating and responding to TOH.

Specifically, 80% of survey respondents reported that TOH was directed at them or their organization. Research participants also shared that TOH often increased when organizations shared or promoted content about or for 2STN+ people, or when 2STN+ issues were being discussed in the media. TOH was most commonly experienced on social media platforms, including Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram. The most prevalent examples of TOH included accusations of pedophilia and grooming, transphobic slurs, and threats of violence, including death threats. Survey respondents identified 'protecting children' and 'parental rights' as the most commonly attributed rationales for TOH, while interview participants shared that TOH was often rooted in cultural and religious beliefs.

The research findings revealed the negative impacts that TOH has had on 2STN+ professionals. For example, participants who experienced TOH reported that they subsequently reduced and/or limited their presence

on social media, reduced the amount of personal information they shared on social media, and increased their vigilance online. Participants also reported negative impacts on their mental health, including anxiety and C-PTSD.

The findings also revealed the strategies and policies that organizations have used to mitigate and address TOH, such as monitoring for TOH, blocking accounts that share TOH, deleting TOH, reporting TOH on social media platforms, limiting identifiable information about employees online, and providing employees with resources when they experience TOH. Research participants also shared desired responses to TOH from their organizations, such as clear policies for TOH, protocols for mitigating and responding to TOH, mental health support, and other resources to address the impacts of TOH. Additionally, organizational barriers to implementing these desired approaches, as well as structural issues such as insufficient social media policies and discriminatory police practices were also discussed.

Below we synthesize and discuss key findings from the survey and interview data, and the implications of those findings.

Transphobic Discourses and Attacks on Trans Rights

Research participants' experiences of TOH reflect broader shifts towards conservative and far-right politics, rising

anti-trans hate, and attacks on trans rights in Canada. Three provinces have passed anti-trans legislation in the last two years that emerge from the ‘parental rights’ movement. In 2023, provincial legislation passed in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick³, requiring parental consent for students to use their chosen names and pronouns in public schools (The Canadian Press, 2023; Latimer, 2023). In early 2024, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith introduced a set of provincial policies that included similar parental disclosure rules to ban gender-affirming hormone treatment for children 15 and under, as well as surgery for those 17 and under (Ha, 2024). Since then, three provincial anti-trans bills received Royal Assent, thereby becoming law (Education Amendment Act, 2024; Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024; Fairness and Safety in Sport Act, 2024)⁴. These anti-trans laws reflect and fuel the online spread of transphobic discourses, including misinformation and disinformation about 2STN+ youth and gender-affirming care. Moreover, these laws stigmatize the work of organizations serving 2STN+ people and draw unnecessary, and potentially negative, public attention to 2STN+ rights and inclusion, both of which were identified by participants as factors contributing to increased TOH against 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations and their members.

As such, we recognize that the transphobic and anti-trans discourses uncovered in this research (for example, see Table 3) are reflective of the broader socio-political landscape in Canada. These discourses are espoused by people both online and offline, and many of them share similar underlying beliefs rooted in biological essentialism, including the beliefs that gender identity is not ‘real,’ there are only two sexes (female and male), sex is determined before or at birth and is forever unchangeable, and 2STN+ people are mentally ill, sexually perverse, and/or a threat to children.

In fact, transphobic discourses and rationales uncovered in this research were found to weaponize rights-based language, which poses a threat to 2STN+ people’s safety, autonomy, legal rights, and equality. The ‘parental rights’ argument, for example, echoes the rhetoric of ‘protecting children’ employed by anti-2SLTBQIA+ movements in the 1960s and 70s (Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2022b; Frank, 2013). Similarly, people have used arguments about protecting free speech, freedom of expression, and religious rights to justify transphobic hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation against 2STN+ people both online and offline (Egale, n.d.; Lannon, 2020).

³ The 2024 New Brunswick election subsequently led to the overturning of Policy 713.

⁴ When enforced in Alberta, this legislation will: require parental approval for public school students to use their chosen names and take sex education classes; ban puberty blockers, hormone therapies, and gender-affirming surgeries for minors 15 and under; and create “biological female-only divisions” for women and girls’ sports, thereby giving permission for the exclusion of trans women and girls in sport (Govt. of Alberta 2024c; 2024b; 2024a).

BIPOC Experiences of Transphobic Online Hate

Coping with Transphobic Online Hate

Though most interview participants reported that there was some level of peer support available to them within their organizations, some BIPOC participants were hesitant or avoidant of this support and opted to use their personal communities for social support instead.

Avoidance of peer support could be attributed to the presence or fear of interpersonal discrimination, which is experienced at an individual level between people, such as with microaggressions. A review of Canadian studies on intersecting microaggressions found that BIPOC 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals faced microaggressions related to their sexual and gender identities from their non-2SLGBTQIA+ communities and family members, while in 2SLGBTQIA+ spaces, they encountered microaggressions targeting their racial identities (Sadika et al., 2020).

Another study found that racial microaggressions in the workplace were linked with decreased interpersonal trust, making BIPOC employees less likely to be vulnerable with colleagues in peer support situations (Okwu & Adair, 2023). With this in mind, BIPOC 2STN+ individuals who experience TOH may choose to rely on fellow BIPOC 2STN+ individuals rather than colleagues who are white or cisgender for social support

to avoid discrimination, including microaggressions, after experiencing TOH.

BIPOC 2STN+ employees occupy a unique social situation where their identities as racialized 2STN+ people can increase the barriers, discrimination, and harm they experience from people both outside and inside their organization. While social support made available in the workplace can have positive effects, such as mitigating work-related stress and increasing emotional well-being (Sloan et al., 2013), if BIPOC participants do not feel comfortable using this resource, they are unable to access its benefits when faced with stress and harm related to TOH.

Distrust in Policing and the Legal System

When asked about their awareness or desire to use legal options to address TOH, some BIPOC participants said that these were not options they seriously considered because of distrust in the police and legal system and concerns that engaging with the legal system could cause additional harm. Notably, one interview participant called attention to systemic issues in policing that have historically led police to harm BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. It was noteworthy that this was a sentiment shared by BIPOC participants whose identities sit at the intersections of race and gender.

Police and the legal system in Canada have a long history of targeting racialized communities and 2STN+ communities,

with individuals who fall into both groups facing disproportionate levels of discrimination and violence in these systems (Busby, 2020; Grasso et al., 2024). In their interactions with police, 2STN+ people have suffered disproportionate violence (Grasso et al., 2024). Among racialized 2STN+ people, reports of police violence are even higher than that of their white peers (Chih et al., 2020). This has led the majority of 2STN+ people in Canada to anticipate unfair treatment from police if they were to report a crime (Chih et al., 2020; Trans PULSE Canada, 2021a; JusticeTrans 2022).

All participants who had reported TOH to the police stated that the response they received was inadequate. In these cases of TOH, participants had been threatened with extreme violence but the police's response did not reflect the severity of the threats. These experiences are reflective of the discrimination that 2STN+ people in Canada face in policing (Grasso et al., 2024) and the legal system more broadly (Ashley, 2018; Chih et al., 2020; JusticeTrans, 2022; Canadian Bar Association, 2022). Unfortunately, transphobic violence is also less frequently investigated and prosecuted than violence against cisgender people (Ashley, 2018; Chih et al., 2020). Due to the systemic discrimination that 2STN+ and BIPOC people face from police and the legal system more broadly, 2STN+ victims, particularly those who are BIPOC, may be less likely to report TOH to police or seek resolution through the legal system.

Navigating Transphobic Online Hate from Marginalized Communities

Some participants indicated that they responded, or desired to respond, differently to TOH based on the perceived identity of the perpetrator, such as when the perpetrator belonged to a marginalized group. Specifically, some participants were more open to educating perpetrators of TOH that were from 2SLGBTQIA+ or BIPOC communities.

TOH perpetrated by 2SLGBTQIA+ people is an example of lateral violence since it occurs between individuals within the same marginalized community. Lateral violence against 2STN+ people can be perpetrated by queer individuals who are cisgender (Tran, et al., 2022). Lateral violence against racialized 2STN+ people, whose identities are marginalized across the axes of race, gender, and/or sexuality, can come from racialized people (whether 2STN+ or not) and white LGBTQIA+ people (Tran, et al., 2022). This is important to keep in mind since TOH can be perpetuated by people within 2STN+, 2SLGBTQIA+, and BIPOC communities as well as people outside of those communities. And, as noted above, how victims respond to incidents of TOH may change relative to their identities and the perpetrator's identities. Thus, positionality⁵ seems to be a factor in how victims of TOH desire to respond to perpetrators.

The desire for 2STN+ participants to change their responses to TOH when

the hate comes from other marginalized individuals may reflect their empathy for marginalized communities, due to the shared experience of systemic oppression. Empathy can also foster people's willingness to help other members of their community who share similar identities and experiences (Stürmer et al., 2006). This motivation to help may explain some 2STN+ participants' desire to educate perpetrators with whom they share identities. It also exposes the complexities that intersectionality brings to people's experiences with TOH. As organizations consider how to respond to TOH, support victims, and educate perpetrators, it is important to keep in mind how identity can factor into people's experiences. Taking a nuanced approach to TOH that pays attention to intersectionality and positionality can foster sensitivity, awareness, and solidarity among members of 2STN+, 2SLGBTQIA+, and BIPOC communities.

Tokenism

One participant talked about being the only 2STN+ employee in an organization with almost no tools, support, or policies

⁵ Positionality refers to an individual's social location relative to other people, and it can impact how an individual perceives or interacts with others. For example, consider how a trans person may feel and act when in a group of 2STN+ people compared to a group of cisgender, heterosexual people. Even though the trans person's identities remain the same across both groups, their positionality—or their relationship and connections to—the other people in each group changes, which can impact how they feel and act.

to address TOH, and they expressed concern about the tokenizing nature of their employment. Tokenism is the practice of hiring individuals from marginalized groups to create an appearance of diversity and inclusion, but without taking meaningful steps to make these employees feel valued, develop their sense of belonging, or provide requisite support (Camargo, 2023). Tokenism has significant consequences on the well-being of tokenized employees, including impacts to their physical health, mental health, and self-esteem (Camargo, 2023).

When organizations hire 2STN+ employees without taking steps to address tokenism, the result can harm 2STN+ employees. Tokenism in many ways is exploitative of 2STN+ employees, as organizations seek to benefit from 2STN+ employees' labour, expertise, knowledge, and the positive perception their organizations receive in some circles for the appearance of diversity and inclusion. For 2STN+ professionals working in the community sector, the harms of tokenism can compound the impacts of TOH. Specifically, the lack of organizational responses to TOH is an example of tokenism because the policies, tools, and resources needed to help 2STN+ professionals deal with TOH are inadequate and fail to provide necessary support. Consequently, 2STN+ employees are negatively impacted by both TOH and tokenism.

Employment Discrimination

For many participants, being publicly 'out' as 2STN+ online was a major point of contention that could present

challenges or consequences, such as increased risk of TOH and hiring discrimination. These fears are not unfounded as hiring and employment discrimination against 2STN+ employees is widely reported (McFadden, 2020). Notably, Women and Gender Equality Canada (2023) reported that 2STN+ job seekers face significantly higher rates of hiring discrimination compared to their cisgender counterparts. Over the span of five years, 2STN+ participants were denied employment opportunities at rates two to three times higher than cisgender job seekers due to their gender identity (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2023).

The issue of employment discrimination was further discussed by one participant who identified the financial consequences of experiencing this form of discrimination. Employment discrimination, among other factors, can be attributed to the low-income levels reported by 2STN+ Canadians in comparison to non-2STN+ individuals (Kinitz et al., 2022). Economic precarity and employment discrimination force 2STN+ employees to consider how they portray themselves and to what extent they openly share their gender identity in a professional context.

Thus, while participants recognized the benefits of being ‘out’ in terms of representing their communities and increasing the legitimacy of their work with 2STN+ communities, they were concerned about the potentially discriminatory impacts it could have on their employment opportunities.

Social Media Policies

Participants noted that while many social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), and YouTube, provide features for users to report, block, and mute other users, these features are insufficient when trying to reduce or eliminate TOH. These features require users to self-report, which means the onus is on individuals to address the hate they experience. Social media companies need to address the lack of transparency related to their content moderation systems and enact better systems that are more effective in filtering out harmful, anti-trans content so that 2STN+ users do not experience TOH in the first place (GLAAD, 2024).

According to interview participants, the platform where the most TOH occurred was X (Twitter)—yet for survey respondents, Facebook was the platform where TOH occurred the most. The fact that TOH was common on both X (Twitter) and Facebook is unsurprising given that these companies have been dismantling their anti-discrimination policies and removing protections for marginalized communities. For example, in 2023, X (Twitter) removed its 2018 policy which banned targeted misgendering and/or deadnaming against 2STN+ users (The Associated Press, 2023; X Safety, 2023). As a result, between 2022 and 2023, the average weekly rate of posts containing hate speech on X (Twitter) increased by 50% (Hickey et al., 2025). In January 2025, Meta (which owns Facebook and Instagram) changed its hateful content policies to permit exclusionary language “when discussing transgender rights,”

including “allegations of mental illness or abnormality” directed at 2SLGBTQIA+ users (Meta, 2025). The company also removed their third-party fact-checking systems and replaced them with a user-led “community notes” accountability system modeled after the same feature on X (Twitter) (Kaplan, 2025). While the effects of Meta’s policy changes are not yet known, it is expected that the prevalence and impacts of hate speech, particularly against 2STN+ people, will increase and worsen – just like it did on X (Twitter).

The pervasiveness of TOH on X (Twitter) has prompted many organizations to leave the platform, including LGBT Youthline, PFLAG Canada, and Egale who made the decision in July 2024 to deactivate their X (Twitter) accounts, citing the simultaneous “rise in anti-2SLGBTQI hate” and “lack of effective policies” as obstacles to providing safe spaces for 2STN+ people and other 2SLGBTQIA+ communities (PFLAG Canada, 2024, para. 3; Egale, 2024a, para. 2; LGBT Youthline, 2024). As X (Twitter), Meta, and other social media companies continue to roll back their anti-discrimination policies and protections for marginalized populations, more organizations may be inclined to stop using these platforms or seek out alternatives that are more effective in addressing TOH and safer for their 2STN+ employees and members.

Transphobic Online Hate and Accountability

One of the difficulties that victims of TOH face when seeking recourse is that

online hate is difficult to prosecute. Under the Canadian Criminal Code, online behaviours need to meet criminal standards of hate speech to be legally considered a crime (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2024). At the time of publication, current anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies are not equipped to comprehensively prosecute online hate perpetrators (Bailey & Mathen, 2019). Moreover, there are currently no clear guidelines or legal requirements for social media companies to prevent online hate or remove hateful actors from their platforms. The question of who is responsible for mitigating and addressing online hate—the companies that own the social media platforms, the criminal justice system, or the government—remains unclear.

Lack of Funding and Resources

When asked to identify potential barriers to implementing meaningful policies and strategies to address TOH, nearly all interview participants called attention to the lack of funding available to community organizations serving 2SLGBTQIA+ and 2STN+ populations. A lack of capacity and a lack of resources were also reported as potential barriers.

Chronic underfunding is a major problem in Canada’s nonprofit sector, especially for organizations serving marginalized communities. While there has been an increase in demand for nonprofit services across Canada, many nonprofits have not seen an increase in their funding to match this demand,

thereby leading to financial and labour strain (Statistics Canada, 2024). These problems are compounded by systemic homophobia and transphobia, which have made it difficult for 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations to apply for and/or access available funds, thereby resulting in them being underfunded (Loewen Walker et al., 2021). For BIPOC 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, this issue is further exacerbated by systemic racism, which contributes to the massive underfunding of BIPOC-serving organizations and services for racialized communities (Pereira et al., n.d.; Harper, 2022). Overall, the lack of funding makes it difficult for organizations to address TOH and provide the necessary support and resources to members of their communities.

Additionally, there is unique demand for 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations since they are often one of the few places where 2SLGBTQIA+ people feel safe and comfortable accessing resources (Loewen Walker et al., 2021). For victims of TOH, these organizations may be their only viable option for accessing support related to the emotional, psychological, and even physical consequences of online hate. By offering tailored resources—such as mental health support, digital safety training, and community-led interventions—these organizations can help mitigate the impacts of TOH and empower individuals to navigate online spaces with greater confidence and resilience. Ensuring that victims of TOH receive meaningful support is not only critical for individual well-being but also for fostering stronger, more inclusive 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Limitations

This project is not without its limitations. Firstly, this research was conducted solely in English, and therefore cannot speak to the experiences that 2STN+ people have with TOH in other languages, such as French.

Recruitment and data collection were conducted online, which allowed people to participate regardless of where they were located in Canada. However, online research can also be limiting as it requires reliable internet access, a computer or a mobile device, and digital literacy skills.

Eligibility criteria was limited to a specific subgroup (i.e., professionals working at 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations in Canada) of a marginalized population (i.e., 2STN+ people). This contributed to a relatively small recruitment pool and, consequently, a small sample size. For example, organizations that have experienced TOH but do not have a 2STN+ staff member were unable to participate in the research. Some individuals' and organizations' experiences with TOH may therefore be missing from our findings.

Additionally, since we sought input from marginalized individuals working in an under-resourced sector (i.e., nonprofits and community organizations), organizations and individuals with limited resources may have faced additional barriers to participate.

Participants located in Ontario are overrepresented in the data. This is because recruitment for the survey and interviews was conducted through

ODLAN's and W2A's networks of 2SLGBTQIA+ nonprofits and community organizations, many of which are located in Ontario. While we made efforts to acquire a more diverse geographic sampling by seeking assistance from our Research Advisory Committee members (which included representation from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, and Ontario), findings may not reflect the broader experiences of 2STN+ people living in different geographic regions.

Most participants were white and presumed or assigned female at birth, which means that data were not substantial enough to create a separate, stand-alone section about the impacts or mitigation of TOH against specific marginalized communities. Despite this, we had questions on the survey and in the interviews where participants could discuss the intersections of their experiences of TOH with other forms of hate (e.g., racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia), which are included throughout the report. Future research could do purposeful sampling of 2STN+ people to ensure greater diversity across different demographic identities and examine how different identities factor into 2STN+ people's experiences with TOH.

We recognize the diversity of 2STN+ people and organizations, and we understand that the data collected from the survey and interviews may not fully capture or reflect the range of experiences that 2STN+ communities across Canada have with TOH. Moreover, there may be other forms of TOH that were not uncovered in our work, especially as technologies like AI evolve and become more present in

our everyday lives. There is an urgent, growing need for research in this area, and we encourage others to build on this work and further investigate the ways in which 2STN+ people and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations experience TOH.

Recommendations

Based on our analysis of interview and survey data and consultations with the Research Advisory Committee, we offer several recommendations. These recommendations are founded in the principles of intersectionality, anti-racism, and anti-oppression, and they are meant to help 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations address TOH and support their 2STN+ members (e.g., staff, volunteers, board members).

Organizations should ground their policies and strategies in the needs of 2STN+ people, particularly BIPOC people, and take a harm-reduction approach to ensure the changes implemented are trauma-informed and sensitive to these individuals' lived

experiences. Organizations should also prioritize a collaborative approach when implementing these recommendations to ensure policies legitimize and recognize the harms and consequences faced by organization members who are targeted by and/or witnesses of TOH. Additionally, we encourage organizations to form partnerships and collaborate with one another so that they can share resources, strategies, and expertise, and reduce barriers (including those related to time, cost, knowledge, and capacity), which might otherwise prohibit them from adopting these recommendations.

With all this in mind, we recommend that 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations:

1. Develop and implement formal policies, such as:

- Anti-discrimination and sexual harassment policies
- Privacy policies that provide guidance on what identifiable information can be safely posted online (e.g., name, email address, phone number, pronouns)
- Social media and online hate policies, which could include the following:
 - Code of conduct for social media platforms, online events/ activities, email communications, and other digital platforms managed by the organization
 - Protocols for what to do when someone becomes a target of TOH, including who responds and how to respond
 - Protocols for documenting evidence of TOH and hateful actors

2. Engage in frequent and consistent communication of policies, strategies, and supports provided by the organization

3. Provide training and resources for all members on topics, such as:

- How to mitigate and respond to TOH
- How to promote digital safety and online security
- How to support victims of TOH and be sensitive to 2STN+ people's experiences with harm

4. Provide resources and supports for 2STN+ members impacted by TOH, including access to mental health supports

5. Partner with organizations to provide additional support for marginalized members if adequate support cannot be provided internally

6. Create a safety plan for in-person and virtual events, activities, etc. hosted by the organization to ensure everyone is prepared to address TOH, such as:

- Promote events through closed channels (e.g., an organization's email network) rather than wide social media promotion
- Offer registration in advance so that attendees can be vetted, rather than open access or public links that allow anyone to join
- Share event information (e.g., date, location) only with registered attendees
- Limit recording of events and the distribution of event recordings to reduce manipulation and sharing of recordings

Though these recommendations were reviewed and endorsed by community members to ensure they are practical and feasible, they are broad and may need to be tailored to the unique context of individual 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, depending on their capacity, number

of staff, funding, access to resources, geography, and the communities they serve.

Additional suggestions and tips on how to implement these recommendations can be found in Appendix E.

Conclusion

Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate is rising in Canada and TOH puts an already marginalized community at further risk. This research highlights the challenges that TOH poses for 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and the impacts of TOH on 2STN+ individuals. TOH is an avenue for harm and discrimination that 2STN+ individuals and their organizations must mitigate and address. 2STN+ professionals and 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations must practice hypervigilance and exert additional efforts to protect their wellbeing in online spaces.

This study has highlighted the prominence of transphobic rationales and discourses, from ‘parental rights’ to TERF movements, which target 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and 2STN+ individuals. Throughout this research, social media platforms were identified as spaces of heightened risk for TOH for organizations and their members, particularly when efforts were made to promote, discuss or practice 2STN+ inclusion. Through public posts and direct messaging, TOH was both publicly and privately enacted, harming not only organizations and 2STN+ employees, but the community members who follow organizations on social media.

Participants in this study have discussed the variety of ways that TOH has been addressed at the organizational and individual level, including policies and strategies developed to monitor and remove TOH from social media platforms. However, a lack of resources and staff burnout were identified as barriers to implementing or improving

policies and strategies to mitigate the impact of TOH on organizations and employees.

The experience of TOH was not universal amongst participants. BIPOC 2STN+ participants highlighted unique challenges they faced in regards to TOH, including the role of systemic racism in shaping the support they accessed or avoided, and the consequences of tokenism.

The recommendations provided in this report are intended as a starting point to help guide 2SLGBTQIA+ serving organizations in developing policies and strategies to mitigate and address TOH and better support 2STN+ employees. We encourage organizations to prioritize community care to help build solidarity and resilience among 2STN+ members, particularly among those who have experienced TOH. Together, we can work to strengthen 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and foster safer experiences for 2STN+ people in both online and offline spaces.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

Are you interested in sharing your professional experiences with

TRANSPHOBIC ONLINE HATE?

Help inform research on how Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary (2STN+) community organizations can mitigate online hate.

This project aims to understand how Canadian nonprofits and community organizations that serve 2SLGBTQIA+ communities experience transphobic online hate and how to mitigate and respond to online hate. Participants will be asked to discuss their professional experiences with transphobic online hate.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Working at a Canadian organization that serves 2SLGBTQIA+ communities
- 18+ years old
- Identify as Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and/or intersex (2STN+)
- Complete an online survey that takes approx. 20-30 minutes

The survey will be open between October 1 - November 10, 2024.

Survey respondents will be entered in a draw to win one of ten \$40 gift cards (odds of winning approx. 1 in 5).

Take the survey here: surveymonkey.com/r/digital_resilience

This study is led by the Ontario Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN), in partnership with Wisdom2Action (W2A). It is funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. This research received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board. For more information, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics in the Office of Research Ethics, York University (e-mail ore@yorku.ca). ORE certificate number: 2024-232.



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Eligibility Requirements:


- Working at a Canadian organization that serves 2SLGBTQIA+ communities
- 18+ years old
- Identify as Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and/or intersex (2STN+)
- Can commit to participating in one 60-minute interview held on Zoom

Interviews will take place between October 1 - November 10, 2024.

Interview participants will receive an honorarium of \$120 for their participation.

Register here: wisdom2action.org/odlan/

This study is led by the Ontario Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN), in partnership with Wisdom2Action (W2A). It is funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. This research received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board. For more information, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics in the Office of Research Ethics, York University (e-mail ore@yorku.ca). ORE certificate number: 2024-232.




odlancanada

odlancanada EXTENDED!!! This survey has been extended until November 10th!

We need your help to inform research on how Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary (2STN+) community organizations can mitigate online hate!

🏳️‍🌈 Do you identify as Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and/or intersex (2STN+)?

🏢 Do you work for a 2STN+ or 2SLGBTQIA+ organization?

🕒 Have time to complete a 20-30 minute survey?

Fill out the survey at the link in our bio!

You could win 1 of 10 gift cards!

ID in comments.
 #2SLGBTQIA #2STN #LGBT #QueerResearch #DigitalSafety
 #Queers4DigitalSafety #BlockOnlineHate #DigitalInclusion
 Edited - 17w

odlancanada ID1: Dark blue text reads: "Are you interested in sharing your professional experiences with transphobic online hate? Help inform research on how Two Spirit, trans, and nonbinary (2STN+) community organizations can mitigate online hate.". ID2: "Eligibility Requirements: Working at a Canadian organization that serves 2STN+ and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, 18+ years old, identify as Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and/or intersex. Complete an online survey that takes approx. 20-30 minutes." ID3: "The survey will be open from October 1- November 1, 2024. Survey

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Appendix B: Survey Questions

Section 1: Incidences of Transphobic Online Hate

1. Has your organization (including individual employees) experienced transphobic online hate from groups or individuals? (select all that apply)
 - Yes, the organization has received transphobic online hate
 - Yes, I have, as an employee of the organization, received transphobic online hate
 - Yes, other employees of the organization received transphobic online hate
 - No
 - Skip question

[Skip logic] If 'no' is selected:

- a. Why do you think your organization has not received transphobic online hate or harassment? (short response)
- b. How worried if your organization about potentially receiving transphobic online hate or harassment. (1= not worried at all, 5= extremely worried)

→ Then jump to Section 2, question 9 (skip Qs 2-8) and end survey after Section 2, question 22 (skip Section 3)

[Skip logic] If 'yes' is selected, continue:

2. Please describe the online hate your organization experienced in 2-3 sentences. (Free text response)
3. What (if anything) preceded the transphobic online hate your organization has experienced? (select all that apply)
 - Days of significance (e.g., Transgender Day of Visibility)
 - Statements made in support of Two Spirit, trans, nonbinary and gender nonconforming (2STN+) communities
 - Increased visibility (from boosted or shared posts)
 - Posts by transphobic influencers, politicians, celebrities, etc.
 - Change to policies and/or laws (e.g. court decisions, professional associations, legislation)
 - Discussion of 2STN+ communities or issues in the news and media
 - Other: please write in

4. Are most of the hateful comments directed at: (select all that apply)
- The organization
 - 2STN+ communities in general
 - Individuals in the organization
 - Other: please write in
5. On which platforms or online avenues has this hate occurred? (select all that apply)
- Instagram
 - Facebook
 - X (Twitter)
 - TikTok
 - Email
 - Organization's website
 - LinkedIn
 - Zoom
 - Other: write-in
 - N/A
6. Is there a particular platform on which your organization has received the most hate? (select one)
- Instagram
 - Facebook
 - X (Twitter)
 - TikTok
 - Email
 - Organization's website
 - LinkedIn
 - Zoom
 - Other: write-in
 - N/A
7. Are there any social media or online platforms that your organization does not engage with due to heightened transphobic online hate? (select all that apply)
- Instagram
 - Facebook
 - X (Twitter)
 - TikTok
 - LinkedIn
 - Zoom
 - Other: write-in
 - N/A

8. What language have you seen being used by those creating transphobic online hate to define themselves as a group, movement, or to justify their transphobic online hate?
- Pro-family movement
 - Gender critical movement
 - Anti-gender movement
 - Women’s rights campaigns (often used in the context of opposing transgender inclusion in women’s spaces)
 - Biological realism
 - Protect women’s and girls’ sports
 - Fairness in sports
 - Protecting the children (or similar phrases implying protection of children from certain ideologies)
 - Parental rights groups
 - Sex-based rights
 - LGB alliance (sometimes used to exclude the “T” in LGBT)
 - Traditional values or family values
 - Radical feminist groups that are anti-transgender, sometimes referred to as Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs)
 - Free speech advocates (when used to defend anti-trans viewpoints)
 - Other: write-in

Section 2: Resources, Policies and Strategies

9. Prior to starting your role in your current organization, how would you identify the strength of your digital literacy skills? (likert 1-5)
10. How would you describe your access to technology (computers, software, etc.) and internet connection where you currently work?
- No access
 - Limited access
 - Moderate access
 - No barriers
11. What resources or tools has your organization provided staff to address transphobic online hate? (free text response)
12. What resources or tools could your organization provide staff to address transphobic online hate? (free text response)

13. Does your organization have strategies for mitigating incidents of transphobic online hate?

- Yes
- No
- Skip question

[Skip logic] If 'no' is selected, skip to question 18

[Skip logic] If 'yes' is selected, continue:

14. Which of the following strategies, if any, has your organization used to prevent or address incidents of transphobic online hate? (Select all that apply; for each response that is selected, a likert scale of 1-5 will populate)

- Developed accessible and confidential systems for reporting incidents of online hate or harassment.
 - On a scale of 1-5, (1=not effective at all, 5=extremely effective) how effective have these strategies been in mitigating instances of transphobic online hate?
- Actively monitored social media and online platforms for transphobic hate or harassment using automated tools.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Actively monitored social media and online platforms for transphobic hate or harassment using human moderators.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Provided resources and support, including counseling and mental health services, for those affected by transphobic online hate or harassment.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Utilized software tools to filter transphobic and other harmful content and protect personal information from exposure online.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Conducted training on recognizing and responding to transphobic online hate or harassment.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Removal or limited sharing of identifying information of employees online.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Partnered with other organizations or experts to stay informed on best practices and emerging threats related to transphobic online hate or harassment.
 - Likert scale 1-5
- Blocking and tracking the social media accounts of those who target the organization and its employees/members with transphobic online hate
 - Likert scale 1-5
- None of the above strategies have been implemented.

15. Are there any other strategies that your organization has for preventing or addressing incidents of transphobic online hate?

- Yes
- No
- Skip question

[Skip logic] If 'no' is selected, skip to question 18

[Skip logic] If 'yes' is selected, continue:

16. Please describe them. (Free text response)

17. On a scale of 1-5, (1=not effective at all, 5=extremely effective) how effective have these strategies been overall in mitigating instances of transphobic online hate?

- Likert scale 1-5

18. Which of the following strategies do you think would be effective for protecting employees and your organization from transphobic online hate? (choose all that apply)

- Developed accessible and confidential systems for reporting incidents of online hate or harassment.
- Actively monitored social media and online platforms for transphobic hate or harassment using automated tools.
- Actively monitored social media and online platforms for transphobic hate or harassment using human moderators.
- Provided resources and support, including counseling and mental health services, for those affected by transphobic online hate or harassment.
- Utilized software tools to filter transphobic and other harmful content and protect personal information from exposure online.
- Conducted training on recognizing and responding to transphobic online hate or harassment.
- Removal or limited sharing of identifying information of employees online.
- Partnered with other organizations or experts to stay informed on best practices and emerging threats related to transphobic online hate or harassment.
- I don't think any of the above strategies would be effective, because: please write in

19. Does your organization have any policies for mitigating incidents of transphobic online hate?

- Yes
- No
- Skip question

[Skip logic] If 'no' is selected, skip to question 22

[Skip logic] If 'yes' is selected, continue:

20. What are the policies? (free text response)

21. On a scale of 1-5, (1=not effective at all, 5=extremely effective), how effective are these policies at mitigating incidents of transphobic online hate?

22. What policy changes could your organization make to provide staff or community members the support they need during these incidents? (free text response)

23. Are there any barriers that exist that are preventing these policies from being implemented? (free text response)

Section 3: Impacts of transphobic Online Hate

24. Compared to before you started working at your organization, how would you say your awareness of transphobic online hate and its prevalence has changed?

- My awareness has not changed.
- My awareness has grown somewhat.
- My awareness has grown significantly.
- My awareness has decreased somewhat.
- My awareness has decreased significantly.

25. Has the threat of legal pursuits (e.g. defamation suits) impacted how your organization responds to transphobic online hate or harassment or how your organization discusses these issues publically?

- Yes
- No
- Skip question

[Skip logic] If 'no' is selected, skip to question 28

[Skip logic] If 'yes' is selected, continue:

26. What impact has this threat had on you? (Free text response)
27. What impact has this threat had on your organization? (Free text response)
28. How have professional experiences of transphobic online hate impacted your professional online presence (including outside of your organization)? (select all that apply)
- I do not post a headshot/photo of myself.
 - I do not use or include my last name.
 - I use a pseudonym to protect my identity.
 - I do not post or include my email address or contact information.
 - I do not have a presence on social media, including LinkedIn.
 - I have increased the privacy settings on my social media and professional networking profiles to limit visibility and control who can contact me.
 - I have significantly reduced my online activity, including limiting posts and interactions.
 - I have modified the type of content I share online, avoiding topics that might attract harassment.
 - I have become more outspoken about topics related to 2STN+ communities and online harassment.
 - I have implemented enhanced security measures (e.g two-factor authentication and stronger passwords) to protect my online accounts from hacking.
 - There has been no impact on my professional online presence.
29. How else have professional experiences of transphobic online hate impacted your professional online presence (including outside of your organization)? (free text response)
30. How have professional experiences of transphobic online hate impacted your personal (non-professional) online presence? (select all that apply)
- I do not post photos of myself.
 - I do not use or include my last name.
 - I use a pseudonym.
 - I do not post or include my email address or contact information.
 - I do not share my affiliation with the organization(s) I work for on my personal social media.
 - I do not have a presence on social media.
 - I have increased the privacy settings on my social media profiles to limit visibility and control who can contact me.
 - I have significantly reduced my online activity, including limiting posts and interactions.

- I have modified the type of content I share online, avoiding topics that might attract harassment.
- I have become more outspoken about topics related to 2STN+ communities and online harassment.
- I have implemented enhanced security measures (e.g two-factor authentication and stronger passwords) to protect my online accounts from hacking.
- There has been no impact on my personal social media presence.

31. How else have professional experiences of transphobic online hate impacted your personal (non-professional) online presence? (free text response)

Appendix C: Demographic Questions

1. What is your age range?
 - 18-29
 - 30-54
 - 55-74
 - 75+
2. What is your gender identity?
 - Write in:
 - Prefer not to say
3. What are your pronouns?
 - Write in:
 - Prefer not to say
4. Do you identify with any of the following terms: (Select all that apply)
 - Two Spirit
 - Trans
 - Nonbinary
 - Gender nonconforming
 - Gender diverse
 - Intersex
 - I do not identify with any of these terms
 - Prefer to say
5. What was your presumed or assigned sex at birth?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Intersex
 - Prefer not to say
6. What is your sexual orientation?
 - Write in:
 - Prefer not to say

7. In which province/territory do you currently live?
- Alberta
 - British Columbia
 - Manitoba
 - New Brunswick
 - Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Northwest Territories
 - Nova Scotia
 - Nunavut
 - Ontario
 - Prince Edward Island
 - Quebec
 - Saskatchewan
 - Yukon
 - Prefer not to say
8. How would you best describe the community you live in?
- Large urban population centre (population of 100,000+)
 - Small or medium population centre (population between 10,000- 99,999)
 - Rural (population below 10,000)
 - Prefer not to say
9. Are you First Nations, Métis, or Inuit?
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
10. What is your racial and/or ethnic identity?
- Write in:
 - Prefer not to say
11. Do you identify as a person with a disability? (We respect your personal definition of disability and invite you to respond based on your own understanding.)
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Prefer not to say

12. Which of the following best describes your employer?

- Nonprofit organization
- For-profit corporation or business
- Government agency
- Self-employed
- Not listed (please specify): _____
- Prefer not to say

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Section 1: Landscape of Transphobic Online Hate

1. Can you describe the types of transphobic online hate your organization has experienced (2-3 sentences preferred)?
2. Are most of the attacks directed at the community in general (e.g., against all 2STN+ people), your organization, and/or specific organizational members/staff?
 - a. On which platforms have this online hate occurred?
 - b. Is there a particular platform on which your organization has received the most hate?
3. Are there any social media or online platforms that your organization does not engage with due to heightened transphobic online hate?
4. What (if anything) preceded the transphobic online hate your organization has experienced? For example, was it in response to specific events or posts?
5. Are the rationalizations or beliefs of those creating transphobic online hate been evident or clear to you?
 - a. If yes, what anti-trans discourses or beliefs have been used to rationalize or justify online hate? For example: religion, scientific beliefs, or cultural assumptions.

Section 2: Policies and Strategies

6. Does your organization have a policy for mitigating incidents of transphobic online hate?
 - a. If yes, how do these policies protect employees from transphobic online hate?
 - b. If yes, how do these policies protect people your organization serves from transphobic online hate?
7. What care or support did you receive (or witness others receive) at work (or in the community) after experiencing transphobic online hate?
8. What policy changes could your organization make to provide staff or community members the support they need during these incidents?
 - a. Are there any barriers that are preventing these policies from being implemented?

9. Does your organization have strategies for mitigating incidents of transphobic online hate?
 - a. If yes, how do these strategies protect employees from transphobic online hate?
 - b. If yes, how do these strategies protect people your organization serves from transphobic online hate?
10. What resources or tools could your organization provide staff for strategies to address transphobic online hate?
 - a. Are there any barriers that exist that are preventing these being implemented?
11. How do the communities you represent or serve inform your organization's response to online hate (e.g., if you are a QTBIPOC organization, how does the intersections of gender/sexuality and race inform your response)?
 - a. Does your response change based on who is making the hateful comments (i.e., someone who is white vs. racialized)?
12. Are there different strategies that you think should be used to mitigate different intersections of transphobic online hate and other forms of hate?
13. Have you, or your organization, ever reported transphobic online hate when it occurred?
 - a. If yes, how was this experience?
 - b. If no, why was it not reported?
14. Are you aware of what options you have to legally report and address transphobic online hate?

Section 3: Impacts of Transphobic Online Hate

15. Has the threat of legal pursuits (e.g., defamation suits) impacted how your organization responds to transphobic online hate or how your organization discusses these issues publically?
16. How have experiences of transphobic online hate impacted your professional online presence (including outside of your organization)?
17. How have experiences of transphobic online hate impacted your personal (nonprofessional) online presence?

Appendix E: Additional Recommendations and Tips for Implementation

Collaborate with organizations as a cost-saving measure and as a means for community building to support the implementation process. For example:

- Cross-organizational training to share and reduce the costs of training
- Sharing strategies and policies so organizations have a foundation of policies and practices to build from
- Sharing information regarding TOH and individuals or groups that should be monitored or blocked

Consider implementing interim practices and procedures while policies are being drafted and approved by a board

Use organizational assessments to identify strengths in policies, strategies, and resources and build off these strengths when working to implement recommendations

Monitor transphobic online spaces such as conservative or right wing blogs, newsletters, and social media to stay aware of potential threats, particularly for organizations whose work is highly visible and experience heightened levels of TOH

Harm-Reduction Approaches to TOH

Share the responsibility of monitoring TOH among multiple members within the organization to reduce the burden on individuals

Be aware of who will be most affected by TOH to limit exposure

Additional Training and Education

Organizations may consider additional training and/or educational campaigns, such as:

Harm-reduction training that is trauma-informed

Systemic oppression and barriers faced by 2STN+ people

Digital safety and combating online hate

Digital Safety and Online Security Tips

Enable 2-factor authentication

Use complex passwords

Use a password manager

Turn off location services

Use an IP address blocker or VPN

Be cautious when sharing identifiable information (e.g., phone numbers, emails, addresses, full names, photos) online

Free Resources - the following resources can be used to support the implementation of the recommendations:

ODLAN's and NTEN's Digital Safety Training for 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations:
<https://www.nten.org/learn/digital-safety-strategies>

Policies and procedures for nonprofits:

- RadHR: <https://radhr.org/>
- Charity Village: https://charityvillage.com/tools_for_nonprofit_leaders_policies_and_procedures/

