ELEMENTS FOR A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR TRANS INDIVIDUALS IN VANCOUVER (LOCATED ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLES)

by

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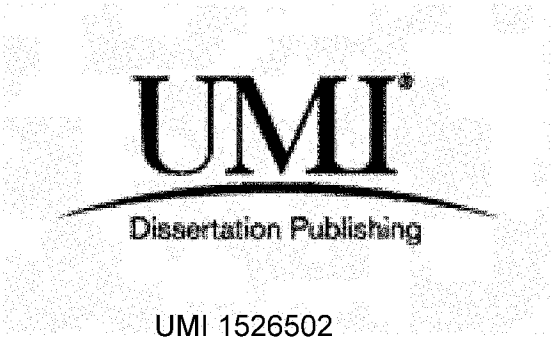

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore what components are required to create inclusive and supportive employment programs for people who self-identify as trans*. This research was conducted in Vancouver, B.C. (located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples) and it analyzed current employment services within the context of self-identified trans* supports. In order to determine what elements are required to create a supportive and inclusive program this study utilized information obtained from in-depth qualitative interviews with people who self-identified as trans*, staff who worked in the employment program field, and staff who worked in organizations that offered trans* supports. The findings of this study were assessed within a queer framework and a disability management framework. Subjects that this study examined were trans* discrimination in the workplace, barriers to employment, beneficial elements of current programs, and areas for future research into trans* employment supports.

Keywords: transsexual, transgender, two-spirit, trans*, employment, program, return-to-work, disability management.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

Glossary

Disability Management Terms

- Employment program: A program designed to assist people with obtaining employment through supports and skill development.
- Return-to-work (RTW) program: This term can be used interchangeably with employment program. It refers to a specific program designed within the workplace for an employee who has been on sick leave and is returning to work.

Trans Specific Terminology

Queen's University's Positive Space (n.d.) group provided the following definitions of key terms:

- Transphobia: Discriminatory treatment towards people who do not identify or present with the conventional conceptions of gender binaries. (female and male)
- Gender identity: A person's self-image about their gender. This can be different from a person's assigned sex. A person's gender identity is not a person's sexual identity.
- Two-spirit: This term is used by North American First Nations to refer to people who have both the male and the female spirit.

The UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center (n.d.) provided the following definitions of key terms:

- Cisgender: This term is used to define a person who is either born into their preferred gender/sex or who chooses to conform to conventional gender/sex expectations.
- Cisgenderism: When a person makes the assumption that everyone is cisgender and in turn creates marginalization towards a person who identifies as other than cisgender, this

is cisgenderism. This includes having the belief that cisgender people are superior to people that are not cisgender.

- Gender non-conforming: People who do not conform to social expectations for male and female gender expression, the expectation of how someone should identify their gender and the norm expression of masculinity and femininity.
- Genderqueer: People who do not have a man or woman gender identity, identify as being between or beyond genders or who identify with a variety of different genders. Generally, this identity is a response to society's construction of gender and the binary system.
- Transgender: People whose gender identity differs from society's expectations for the physical sex they were born into.
- Transgenderist: People who live the majority of the time as a gender role that is different than the role that is commonly associated with their born sex.
- Transition: The complicated and multi-step process that transsexuals undergo to align their anatomy with their sex identity. One form of transitioning is sex reassignment surgery (SRS).
- Transsexual: People who do not identify with the sex they were assigned to at birth based on their anatomy and who undergo medical procedures to transition.
- Transvestite: People who dress in clothing that society most commonly associates with a certain gender and it is not that person's socially assigned gender.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The intention of this research was to determine what components create supportive and inclusive employment programs, within a Western British Columbia context with a focus on Vancouver, located on unceded Coast Salish Territories[1], respectively for trans*[2] self-identified people.

The foundation of this thesis was based on my analysis that while self-identification as trans* is not a disability in itself, the physical, mental and emotional toll the transitioning process takes on one's body likens to a disability in terms of the barriers that exist that those in the majority do not have to face. Additionally, my analysis was based on the recognition that people from all marginalized groups can have staggering strengths and abilities in different facets of their lives that arise from these barriers.

My reason for conducting this qualitative research study grew from people's accounts of the financial challenges they encountered when transitioning or not identifying as cisgender. This was further solidified by literature which shows that people from the self-identified trans* population can cycle through a system where people who do not resemble the constructed ideals

[1] The City of Vancouver's (2013, July) Downtown Eastside Local Area Planning Program recognized that the Downtown Eastside is on unceded Coast Salish territory (p.3). In the works of Nadeau and Young (2005), the authors noted that the Downtown Eastside is on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples and that the "land on which the Downtown Eastside is located was historically an intertribal gathering place for Coast Salish peoples..." (p.17). The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association acknowledged that Vancouver is "on unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the Musqueam, Skxwú7mesh-ulh Úxwumixw (pronounced *Squamish* or *Skohomish*), Stó:lo & Tsleil-Waututh (pronounced: *slay-wa-tooth*) Nations" (British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, n.d.). Though I referred to the location of this study as Vancouver throughout my research, I recognize this land is located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples.

[2] I used the term 'trans*' as an umbrella term for people who self-identify as one or more of the following: transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, transgenderist, non-gender, two-spirit, non-cisgender. This list is not comprehensive and I acknowledge that there are far more identities than the ones I have listed. My use of the term 'trans*' is in reference to any person who self-identifies as non-cisgender.

of gender binaries imposed by mainstream societies, or who financially cannot support their transition to their true gender identity, have more challenges to gaining and maintaining financial security.

Kirk and Belovics (2008) ascertained that though internationally transgender people work in all industries and professions, "as a community, however, transgender people face enormous amounts of employment discrimination, leading to high rates of unemployment and underemployment" (p.29). In a study conducted by a community-based research project in Ontario, one fifth of 433 participants interviewed who self-identified as trans* and were over the age of 16 reported being unemployed or on disability (Bauer et al., 2011, p.1). With employment discrimination towards self-identified trans* people and with income inequality, this study examined what elements are required in an employment program to support self-identified trans* people with securing and maintaining employment.

This study explored elements for supportive and inclusive employment programs for self-identified trans* people through the application of queer theory and a health sciences lens. The purpose of queer theory is to eradicate stereotypes that harm people who are marginalized, including people who self-identify as trans* (de Lauretis, 1991, as cited in Gedro & Mizzi, 2014, p.8). Spargo (1999) described queer theory as "not a singular or systematic conceptual or methodological framework, but a collection of intellectual engagements with the relations between sex, gender and sexual desire" (p.9). This study recognized the intersections of class, race, gender, sex, ethnicity, and wellness that people who self-identify as trans* live and how this shapes their experience. Health sciences played a pivotal role in the shaping of this research with the use of disability management application. The focus of this study expanded beyond social barriers to include medical barriers to employment and accommodation.

The intention of this study was to increase awareness about trans* people's experiences and employment needs to all stakeholders in the employment program field. Parties I hope will benefit from this study are staff working in trans* support organizations, employment program staff, and self-identified trans* people requesting employment supports. With the knowledge shared within this study, particularly from the participants, this will hopefully lead to change. As articulated by Pitner and Sakamoto (2005) institutional and societal changes will eliminate oppression (p.436).

This study was motivated by a critique of the current system that is tailored to cisgender employment needs by recognizing the power behind trans* participants' own self- identification and their lived knowledge. Bellefeuille (2003) maintained that the welfare system is contingent on controlling clients (p.4). I share the approach that some services and institutional systems' very existence arises out of their control over people who rely on their presence. I ascertain that this is also true for employment programs and though this study did not seek to address the larger social issues of economic disparity that result in a need for employment supports, it did seek to identify areas that could be improved within the employment program field for self-identified trans* people while acknowledging the social barriers that do exist. Therefore, throughout this study, in lieu of using the word 'client' I used the term 'people accessing services' or simply 'people', unless it was a direct quote from a participant. The reasoning behind the omission of the word 'client' is due in part to Bellefeuille's argument and due in part to the word's etymology as McKnight (1995) explained that the word 'client' in Greek means a person who is controlled (p.11).

I conducted this study as my Master's in Disability Management thesis for the University of Northern British Columbia. As such, this study did not receive funding except for a research project award granted by the University of Northern British Columbia.

Chapter Two: Statement of Problem

My hypothesis was that by identifying essential employment support this could assist individuals with their transition and prevent potentially cycling through a system where someone who cannot financially support resembling mainstream society's constructed gender binaries will become underemployed or unemployed. It is necessary to note that not everyone desires to resemble society's gender binaries. Instead it is the responsibility of the rest of society to recognize the spectrum of sex and genders as valid and to create accepting environments, including within the workplace. I hypothesized that with increased employment program supports for self-identified trans* people there could be a reduction in the need for social assistance or non-regulated forms of employment, such as sex work as a means of survival, to financially support a person while they are transitioning.

Worldview

Creswell (2009) defined the researcher's worldview as a "general orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher holds" (p.6). My worldview approach was advocacy/participatory. Creswell stated that this type of research contains "an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life" (p.7). My intention was for my findings to positively impact the disability management and employment program field in relation to trans* employment supports. Additionally, my findings increased my understanding about trans* employment supports and needs.

Campbell (2010) ascertained that participatory action research can promote health through identification of illness factors and by "empowering people in the community to interpret their emergent knowledge into actions to improve their health" (p.68). I encouraged respondent participation through transformative participatory approaches as my research relates to health promotion through emotional, physical and mental support for people who self-identify as trans*. Mohan (2001) described the transformative participatory approach as one that recognizes all people as having power, all people as doing acts of resistance and that all people do not require the researcher's agenda to attain empowerment (p.16). This truth was evident when speaking with this study's participants.

Research Questions

My research sought to answer questions on what elements are essential for a trans* specific employment program. Two key areas of focus for employment programs were encouraging new skill development and personal development. To create a foundation of understanding regarding this topic before delving deeper into employment program supports, the first question I sought to answer was what are the physical, mental, and emotional medical barriers that people experience when they are in the process of transitioning?

To assess the types of employment program supports that are required, it was important to understand the effects that barriers can have on self-identified trans* people in terms of employment. Therefore, the second question my research examined was to what extent do the medical barriers, that were identified in response to the first question, affect self-identified trans* people's employability? Additionally, this research explored whether a person's success in their employment program is impacted by the relationships between their health conditions and societal barriers, such as discrimination and finances.

The third question that my research explored was that while acknowledging that each individual has different ideals that they consider to be their final stage in their transition, and for some the process will constantly change with the fluidity of sex, gender and their own health needs, what forms of discrimination do self-identified trans* people experience in the workplace before, after and during their transition? The question also examined how discrimination has influenced trans* people's involvement in employment programs.

To provide insight from other stakeholders, the final question that my research intended to answer was directed to employment program staff and people who work in organizations that provide trans* supports. The question was on whether as experts, in the employment program field and support field, have they identified any barriers to employment for trans* people who access services.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Process

I conducted a literature review on trans* people's experiences with employment on a North American level and on a Vancouver level. Following the principles of Creswell (2009), I searched for key words that would lead to sources (p.29). The primary terms I searched included trans, transgender, transsexual, employment program, work, marginalization, discrimination, two-spirit, British Columbia, Vancouver, unemployment, underemployment, and employment. I conducted the literature review to expand on my own understanding of trans* people's experiences in the workforce and in employment programs, as well as to familiarize myself with transitioning procedures. I searched the databases available through the University of Northern British Columbia's (UNBC) online library access with the date range of 1977-2014. The databases I accessed were as follows: *Academic Search Premier*, *Bibliography of Native North*

Americans, Biomedical Reference Collection: Comprehensive, Business Source Complete, CINAHL® with Full Text, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), Education Resource Information Center, Humanities Full Text™, Humanities Abstracts™, MEDLINE with Full Text, J-STOR, Regional Business News, Professional Development Collection, PsycARTICLES®, PsycINFO®, SAGE ,*Social Sciences Abstracts™, Readers' Guide Abstracts™, Social Sciences Full Text™, Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature™, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX with Full Text, Taylor & Francis Online* and *Women's Studies International.* Additionally, I obtained a number of my resources through online searches. My language restriction (Green & Higgins, 2011, 6.6.2.2) was limited to English as this is my only fluent language.

Successes

The literature I reviewed for this study discussed trans* community issues in health care; employment programs; underemployment and unemployment numbers in Vancouver, and barriers.

Employment programs. Employment program case managers are in a position of power, whether intended or not. People who access services might feel expected to follow the direction of case managers either because their compliance is required or because the case manager is in a professional position. To illustrate, people with an employable status designation with no medical exemption, as opposed to people with a Persons with Disabilities status designation, on social assistance in British Columbia are required by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) to be compliant with their employment program case manager's direction as a condition of their eligibility for income assistance.

Sangganjanavanich (2009) voiced concern over employment program counsellors not being prepared to assist self-identified trans* people with employment supports. Though this

cannot be said for all employment program counsellors, which this study will later show, this concern is valid. Irwin (2002) stated that it "is of the highest importance that counselors recognize such conditions exist and that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) employees are in need of understanding and guidance in order to progress in their chosen careers" (as cited in Kirk & Belovics, 2008, p. 29). Irwin outlined the responsibilities of career counsellors who work with trans* people as providing assistance when trans* people are coping with their experiences, resolving their occupational grief, and planning future career steps (as cited in Kirk & Belovics, p.33).

Literature showed that there is a history of trans* specific employment programs in other cities and countries. However, I was not able to obtain information confirming the existence of trans* specific employment programs operating in Canada, other than one workshop in Vancouver. Consequently, the literature review consisted of three employment programs from the United States. The employment programs provided a background for this study's analysis as they indicated what elements are absent from non-tailored employment programs that are currently operating in Vancouver.

United States employment programs. In the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' (NCAVP) 2013 report on LGBTQ and HIV-affected hate violence in 2012 that occurred in the United States discussed violence at the hands of employers and co-workers. From 2011 to 2012 there was a national 4.3% employer and co-worker offender increase. NCAVP argued that the increase in employer hate violence towards LGBTQ and HIV-affected people signifies a need for non-discrimination policies to stop workplace violence. NCAVP explained that discrimination and hate violence can result in long-term financial ramifications including unemployment and poverty. (NCAP, 2013, p.45)

As a result of discrimination, NCAVP asserted that practitioners and policymakers must form policies, legislation and programs to protect LGBTQ and HIV-affected people. NCAVP applauded programs such as the Transgender Economic Initiative for recruiting employers who are transgender-friendly because NCAVP contended that this reduces risk for transgender people as they will have options over working in places with a greater risk of violence (NCAP, p.48).

The Los Angeles LGBT Centre runs the Transgender Economic Empowerment Project. According to the Los Angeles LGBT Centre's website (n.d.) due to the prevalence of discrimination towards transgender people, the program "offers services to help transgender women and men develop professional skills, find employment with trans-friendly employers and thrive in the workplace". Included in the program's no-cost services are name and gender change assistance, career planning, legal aid, resume support, employment workshops, and one-on-one advocate sessions.

Additionally, NCAVP commended the Project Empowerment Program (PEP) as "a model of an education and employment program specifically for transgender people created in Washington, DC" (p.48). NACVP expanded by stating that ongoing reports of severe acts of violence and homicide to transgender people of colour led to the creation of this program. NACVP explained that the intention of the classes was to provide transgender people with increased economic and employment options as a violence prevention tactic.

When I conducted my initial literature review in October, 2013, the District of Colombia (D.C.)'s website (n.d.) explained that they implemented PEP as an employment program with funding from D.C.'s Department of Employment Services (DOES). According to D.C., the cohort started in October, 2011. In an email I received from DOES in January, 2015, I confirmed the program was no longer offered. However, DOES explained in the email that the program was

successful in relieving the apprehension that the trans* community had regarding participation in an DOES employment program and that trans* people continue to enroll in general cohorts. On their website, D.C. referred to the initial cohort as being "extremely successful and the need for additional cohorts has been identified" (District of Colombia, n.d.). The director of DOES, Lisa Mallory, provided a background on the program in her 2012 testimony to the Committee of Housing and Workforce Development. In her testimony Mallory stated she and Mayor Gray met with leaders and advocates of the transgender community to address barriers to employment and violence. As a result, Mallory explained that the Gray Administration created the transgender cohorts leading to 17 people graduating from the first class, with 3 participants securing full-time unsubsidized employment by the time of Mallory's testimony. Mallory revealed that they were advised by the media that this may have been the first government program in the United States specifically designed for transgender people. (Fiscal Year 2011-2012: Department, 2012, p.4)

A news article by Trull (2011, September) showcased quotes obtained from participants and service providers regarding PEP. Aeger, a PEP participant, articulated their employment barriers as being "difficult to transition at work, in a place where I've known people for many years, it was very tough for me. I had to go through a couple of years of unemployment" (Trull, 2011, September 20). At the time of Trull's article, Charles Jones of the District's Department of Employment Services provided the assurance that participants who finished the program were guaranteed work placement.

The Queer Detainee Empowerment Project is an organization in Brooklyn, New York whose mandate is to provide "direct services for detainee undocuqueer and trans folks in the U.S." (2014). This program provides a variety of services for people who have experienced the U.S. immigration detention system. The services that are included and are not limited to the

following are: assistance with enrolling in higher education and vocational education programs; aid with educational scholarship and grant applications; resume services; job readiness; and employment placement services (Queer Detainee Empowerment Project, 2014).

Vancouver employment programs. The following are employment programs and employment workshops offered in Vancouver, B.C.

EPBC. Employment Programs of British Columbia (EPBC) is the organization that predominantly administers employment programs in B.C. as it currently has the contract to deliver programs for MSDSI (British Columbia Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, 2013). On their website, MSDSI explains that "the purpose of the program is to support unemployed British Columbians in achieving sustainable employment as quickly as possible through an integrated system of employment services and supports" (2013). EPBC not only offers services to MSDSI, this organization offers services to all job seekers. EPBC does not offer trans* specific employment programs.

RainCity Housing and Support Society. There are currently no employment programs specifically for self-identified trans* people for employment in British Columbia. However, RainCity Housing and Support Society announced in 2012 that it would be launching a two year pilot project with the intention of providing both supportive housing and employment within a residential setting for LGBTQ2S+ youth (bill, 2012, August 05). RainCity (2014) validated their project by stating that "transgender and gender non-conforming people are much more likely to be experiencing poverty or homeless than the average person, almost twice as many as the general population". According to RainCity's website, the project is pending further funding with half of the funds received from The Vancouver Foundation as a grant. Aaron Munro, manager of community development for RainCity, explained that the program needs a variety of

services for both short-term and permanent solutions (as cited in Mckeachie, 2014, November 27).

Qmunity. In February, 2014, Qmunity, which is an organization that defines itself as a queer resource centre, hosted a one-day workshop for trans* people who required employment supports. The free workshop, which addressed barriers to employment for trans* people, was led by peers and service providers. The topics that workshop covered were posted on Qmunity's website as follows:

- How to navigate interviews and new workplaces
- What to do in case of discrimination
- Knowing your legal rights
- Coming out/Transitioning at work
- Question and answers. (Qmunity, 2013)

Social assistance statistics. The British Columbia Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) releases employment and assistance statistic reports monthly, which are available to the public.

The reports are categorized to show how many people in B.C. are in receipt of social assistance in each of the following groups: Persons with Disabilities; Employables; Employables with Short Term Medical Conditions; Persons with Multiple Barriers; and Medical Services Only. This report provided valuable context for this study as it provided an estimate of the number of people who are unemployed or underemployed in British Columbia. To illustrate, during the months of July and August, 2014 when I conducted the majority of my participant interviews, there was a decrease in overall open files for people on income assistance compared to 2013. In July, 2014 there was a decrease of 1.2% (MSDSI, 2014a, p.2) and in August, 2014,

there was a decrease of 1.1% (MSDSI, 2014b, p.2). However, specifically for people with provincial disability status, in July, 2014 there was an increase of 4% from the previous year (2014a, p.2) and in August, 2014 there was an increase of 4.1% from the previous year (2014b, p.2). In terms of the population of B.C., people in receipt of social assistance accounted for 3.7% of the population in both July, 2014 and August, 2014 (2014a, p.2; 2014b, p.2).

The reports from MSDSI provided a background on the number of people who were in receipt of income assistance and who were some of the population that accessed services from the Employment Program of B.C. at the time of this study. To illustrate, in July, 2014 there were 9772 active EPBC cases in Vancouver, consisting of the Downtown Eastside, South, City Centre, Westside, Midtown, and the Northeast (MSDSI, 2014c, p.4). In August, 2014 there were 9879 active EPBC cases in Vancouver (2014d, p.4). Since April, 2, 2012, MSDSI noted in their August, 2014 report that EPBC provided service to 96,489 people from specialized groups throughout British Columbia (p.3). According to MSDSI (2014d), "on average 67 per cent of new case managed clients are self identifying as specialized populations across the province" (p.3). For specialized groups, the report included people with disabilities, people with multiple barriers, survivors of abuse, people who have immigrated, as well as other groups.

Appearance and stigma. Marini and Miller (2007) discussed the issues of stigma and appearance for people with chronic illness and disability (CID). In their discussion on women with spinal cord injuries, Marini and Miller explained that the first aspect of people that is judged by others is their personal appearance when they meet for the first time, unless it is over the internet (p.186).

Regarding body image and people with CID, Antonak and Livneh referred to the works of Bramble and Cukr (1998) and McDaniel (1976) by stating that a "person's self-concept and

self-identity are linked to body image and are often seen as conscious, social derivatives of it" (as cited in Antonak & Livneh , 2007, p.128). In discussing disability, they argued that people's self-identity can be denied in social interactions when their appearance rather than their identity becomes the focus. Antonak and Livneh advised that stigma increases towards individuals with CID based on stereotypes and prejudice, which then results in discriminatory practices. Antonak and Livneh argued, based on the works of Falvo (1999) and Wright (1983), that when people with CID internalize these stigmatizing encounters they experience "increased life stress, reduced self-esteem, and withdrawal from social encounters, including treatment and rehabilitation environments" (as cited in Antonak & Livneh, p.129). These issues were pertinent to my research as self-identified trans* people can live with chronic medical conditions and face these judgments based on their physical appearance, which can result in ramifications to their emotional and mental wellness.

Medical barriers. As previously stated there are three different types of medical barriers that can impact people's return or introduction to the workforce: physical, emotional, and mental.

Physical. People who self-identify as trans* might proceed with hormonal treatments or surgeries. Dahl, Feldman, Goldberg, and Jaberi (2006) explained that Male to Female people (MTFs) could undergo hormonal therapies such as endocrinologic feminization "through direct or indirect suppression of the effects of androgens" (A-2), spironolactone and progestins. Dahl, et al. advised that Female to Male people (FTMs) could undergo hormonal therapies for endocrinologic masculinization, such as testosterone, progestins, alternative testosterone, and gonadotropin-releasing hormones.

Bowman and Goldberg (2006) are two authors who created guidelines for the Vancouver Coastal Health's Transgender Program that outline surgical methods that people might proceed

with as part of their transition process. These guidelines outlined both masculization and feminization surgeries. For MTFs, procedures include augmentation mammoplasties, genital reconstruction in the form of vaginoplasties, facial feminizing surgeries and voice pitch-elevating surgeries (p.5-8). For FTMs, procedures can include chest surgeries, hysterectomies, oophorectomies and genital reconstruction surgeries (p.15-20). One point to note is in discussing these procedures with a friend, who self-identifies as trans* and who wanted to remain anonymous, he explained that in his experience with transmen and health care professionals, that top-surgery is hardly ever referred to as a mastectomy because the procedure differentiates with how the chest is sculpted into a male chest. He also added that "the word is feminine in connotation, and calls to mind breasts, which can make some folks feel uncomfortable. I know the word makes me feel uncomfortable when people use it in reference to me and my top-surgery".

Emotional. Gender dysphoria is the emotional condition that non-cisgender people can experience. In the factsheet titled "Gender Dysphoria" released by the American Psychiatric Association (2013) as a preview to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) 5*, gender dysphoria was defined as "a marked difference between the individual's expressed/experienced gender and the gender others would assign him or her, and it must continue for at least six months" (p.1). The term 'gender dysphoria' replaced the term 'gender identity disorder' in the *DSM-5* in May, 2013. The *DSM-IV-TR* (2000) referred to gender identity disorder as a psychiatric diagnostic disorder consisting of "a profound disturbance of the individual's sense of identity with regard to maleness or femaleness" (p.580). Gender dysphoria is a neutral term and recognizes that the emotional feeling a person has towards their gender does not constitute as a disorder.

Mental. Self-identified trans* people could have mental health conditions unrelated to transitioning or that arise while transitioning. As discussed in the *DSM-5* (2013) the following issues are associated with gender dysphoria, as well as with atypical gender expression:

> ... high levels of stigmatization, discrimination, and victimization, leading to negative self-concept, increased rates of mental disorder comorbidity, school dropout, and economic marginalization, including unemployment with attendant social and mental health risks, especially in individuals from resource-poor family backgrounds. (p.458)

Furthermore, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association's website (2014) on mental health wellness among LGBT self-identified people, the primary determinants for a person's positive wellbeing and mental wellness are their freedom from violence and discrimination, social inclusion and access to economic resources. Essentially, with society's pressures, economic barriers and discrimination towards people who are not cisgender, there is a higher likelihood for mental health issues to materialize.

Bockting, Goldberg, and Knudson (2006) highlighted the mental conditions that self-identified trans* people might have in their guidelines titled *Counselling and Mental Health Care of Transgender Adults and Loved Ones.* The conditions they identified were depression, anxiety, suicidality, self-harm, compulsivity, thought disorder, and personality disorder (p.27-29). Bockting, et al. (2006) explained that in the majority of cases they reviewed the mental health conditions they encountered with trans* people had psychosocial causes (p.26). Bockting, et al., (2012) stated that for some people they might need to take "psychotropic medications to alleviate symptoms..." (p.181).

Trans* community issues in healthcare. Leslie Feinberg, who passed away November 15th, 2014, drew attention to trans* healthcare issues. According to Equality Forum (2013)

Feinberg is internationally known as "a leading transgender activist, speaker and writer". In "Trans Health Crisis: For Us It's Life Or Death", Feinberg (2001) recalled hir[3] medical experiences while battling bacterial endocarditis. In a variety of incidents, Feinberg was denied health services, was not allowed to be in the male ward despite presenting as male and awoke to hearing medical staff ridicule hir body. Feinberg stressed that this is not an isolated experience and that trans* health issues are a prevalent social crisis (p.897-898). Sie noted that expanding past male and female identities in medical care will not resolve the crisis as sex and gender expression are on a continuum. Feinberg also noted in this article that despite educating medical professionals on trans* issues for the past 30 years this important education has not made changes in health care delivery. Instead sie argued that trans* community members are the experts of their own lives and of their own needs as patients (p.898). When I interviewed this study's participants and reviewed their responses, I recognized this importance and acknowledged the participants as experts of their own experiences.

Income and service needs. A survey conducted by Goldberg, Hudspith, Macmillan, and Matte in 2003 provided survey results in a series of charts that highlighted the barriers and the need for services for self-identified trans* people. The charts that applied to my study were on the types of income, household income, individual income and need.

Regarding income, out of 179 surveyed trans* people in B.C. in 2003, 45 respondents reported their source of income as government assistance, 6 received long-term disability or non-government pensions, and 1 reported their source of income from drug trafficking or theft. An additional 3 people reported their source of income as disability benefits, which could have been

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[3] Leslie uses the gender neutral pronouns 'sie' and ' hir' (Feinberg, 1998, p.1).

government assistance. Additionally, of the 45 people that reported government assistance, it is likely that a percentage of these respondents were in receipt of a form of disability assistance. In regards to household gross income, 20% of respondents had an income of under $10,000 and 17% of respondents had an income of $10,000 to $20,000. Goldberg, et al.'s study also found that 54% of individual respondents had an individual household gross income of under $20,000. The following three figures show these findings:

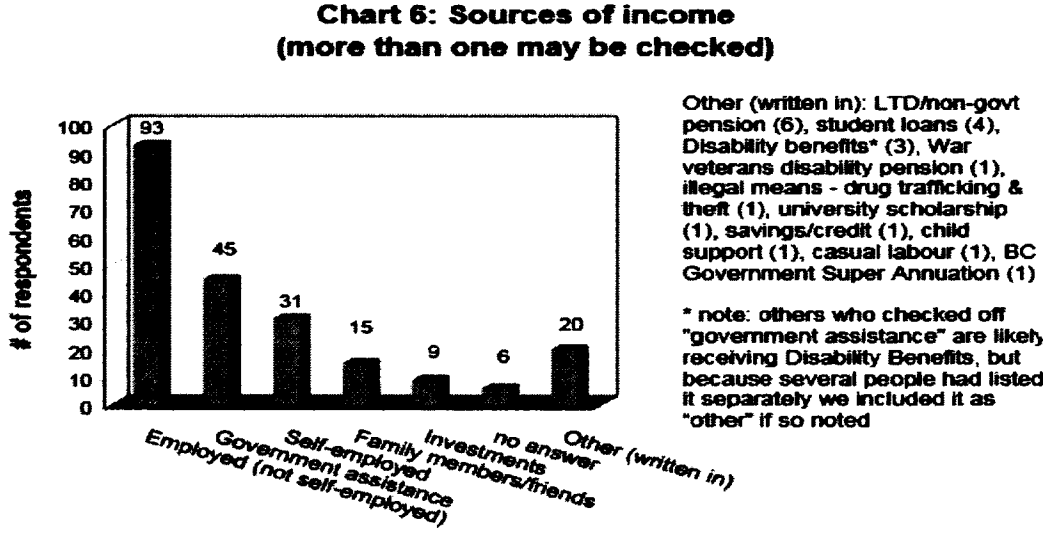

Figure 1. Sources of income for trans* people living in B.C. in 2003. (Goldberg, et al., 2003, Chart 6: Sources of income.)

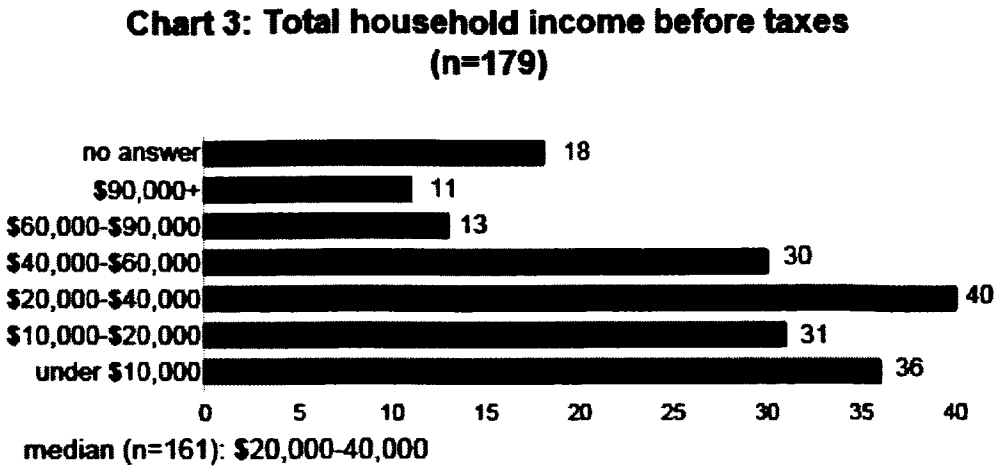

Figure 2. Total household income before taxes earned by trans* people in B.C. in 2003. (Goldberg, et al., Chart 3: Total household income before taxes.)

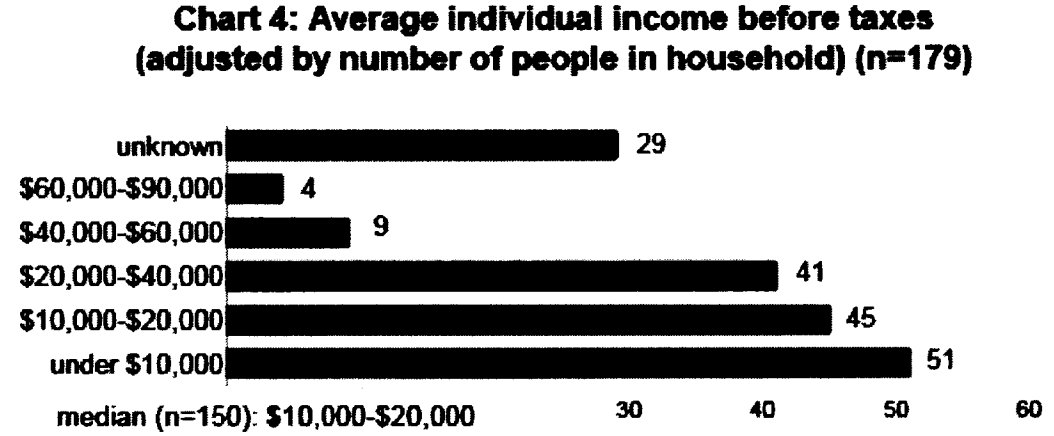

Figure 3. Average individual income before taxes earned by trans* people in B.C. in 2003 with adjustments by number of people living in the household. (Goldberg, et al., Chart 4: Average individual income before taxes.)

In Goldberg and Holman (2006)'s experience, they noted that many transgender parents are both single income and low income earners (p.6). They also referred to the high unemployment and poverty rates among trans* people (p.4). Goldberg and Holman advised that trans* people have to budget and plan for expenses for their transition that are not covered by the province's Medical Service Plan, including electrolysis, speech therapy and facial feminization

surgery (p.5). By not having funds for these processes, individuals can experience financial stress while attempting to transition at their own pace.

Regarding services needed in the past, present or anticipated as needed in the future, of the 179 participants, 5 reported that their employers and coworkers needed more information on trans* issues. 5 respondents reported they needed protection from discrimination and 4 listed a need for finding and securing employment (Goldberg & Holman, 2006, p.14). As shown by the chart below, these responses were not included in the interviewers' questions. The respondents wrote their answers into the 'other' section. This act showed how important it was for the participants to add this information to the study.

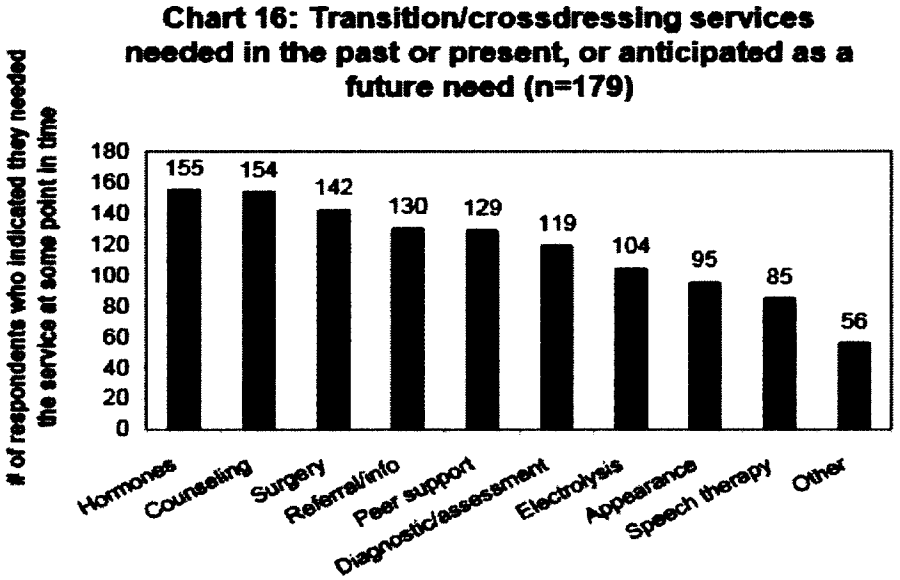

Figure 4. Needs for transition/crossdressing services in B.C. in 2003. (Goldberg, et al. Chart 16: Transition/crossdressing services needed in the past or present, or anticipated as a future need.)

Goldberg and Holman (2006) stated that trans* people may seek employment services for retraining to gain employment or to start new career paths. They argued that the decision to seek employment services could be influenced by three different reasons. One potential reason is the person anticipates harassment in their current workplace as a result of their transition. A second

potential reason is the person might be working in a role that requires the person to be a certain gender, such as a male homecare nurse for a male patient. The third potential reason that Goldberg and Holman offered was that in the case of professions that are predominantly associated with stereotyped gender ideas. To illustrate, they provided the example of working with transgender women who wanted to leave their job in the manual labour field as part of their transition. (p.7)

Gaps in Literature

There are two significant gaps in the literature I reviewed. Firstly, I was unable to locate a trans* specific employment program in Vancouver or even in Canada. Secondly, I was not able to locate any studies that showed the rates of success in employment and underemployment for self-identified trans* people after completing a trans specific employment program in Canada.

Chapter Four: Background

Need

There are two types of needs that drove this research topic. The first type was the needs that are specific to the Vancouver area and the second type was the needs that are specific to disability management.

Needs specific to Vancouver. I selected Vancouver as the location for my study due to the results of The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness' (2010) comparative community profile on homelessness in Metro Vancouver. This committee found that "the transgendered population was primarily found in Vancouver" (p.6) compared to other Metro Vancouver cities, such as Burnaby or North Vancouver. In the Metro Vancouver region, 63% of the transgender population was in Vancouver (p.40).

Additionally, Eberle Planning and Research (2013) conducted a count of Vancouver's

homeless population. This count was conducted on March 13, 2013 in the City of Vancouver. It was the seventh count with the purpose of measuring the number of people who are homeless in Vancouver (p.iv). 1600 people were counted. Out of the 1600, seven trans* homeless people were counted in both sheltered and unsheltered locations (p.18). This figure might not be exactly accurate as Eberle Planning and Research stated that the "interviewers were instructed to record gender based on observation" (p.18). As such, gender was not based on the respondents' own self-identification. However, this survey provided a better understanding on the number of homeless trans* people living in Vancouver. Goldberg and Holman (2006) argued that trans* people and their loved ones face homelessness resulting from poverty due to employment discrimination or an inability to work (p.6).

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) has a reputation for its poverty, high crime rates, homelessness, prostitution, mental illness, and substance abuse (Kerr & Wood, 2006, & Wood, Small & Spittal, 2004, as cited in Bowen, et al., 2009, p.805). Deputy Chief Constable Lemcke of the Vancouver Police Department stated that "it is well known that those working on the streets, particularly those who are gay, female or transgendered, are at high risk of physical and sexual violence up to and including abduction and homicide" (Lemcke, 2012, p.3). A profile conducted by the City of Vancouver estimated that the street sex work population is between 1,000 - 2,000 people with a breakdown of 80% as women and 20% comprised of male and transgendered people (City of Vancouver, 2012, p.25).

Needs specific to disability management. As already stipulated, my approach to this research topic was not to equate a person's self-identification as trans* as a disability in itself. During the recruitment phase of my study, after an organization posted my advertisement on a social media site, a commenter did question this study being done through a Disability

Management program. In response, I clarified, as I am doing now, that the toll that the transition process can take on one's body can be equated to the same barriers and pain as that of a disability. With masculinization and feminization medical treatments, including surgery, removal of hair and endocrine therapy that some trans* people undergo (Feldman & Goldberg, 2006) these processes can affect a person's ability to work. Harder and Scott (2005) advised that the "success of DM in the future will rely on its ability to accommodate the needs of people with chronic conditions" (p.200). As people's transitions and healing differentiates from one another, there is potential for some people's conditions to become chronic. Additionally, gender dysphoria, can occur co-morbidly with mental health issues and other emotional health issues. Harder and Scott warned that complex DM cases may result from issues that are secondary to an individual's main condition, such as emotional trauma (p.116). As listed by Medline Plus (2012), these other emotional health issues and mental health conditions can include depression or anxiety; emotional distress; feeling alone; poor self-concept; and suicidal thoughts ("Possible Complications"). Based on these medical needs, disability management plays a critical part in providing support to self-identified trans* individuals in their RTW process.

Legislation

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2011) stipulated that in Canada employers are required to abide by the *Duty to Accommodate*. Under this accommodation, employers must remove all prohibited discriminatory barriers under the Canadian Human Rights Act (p.3). Discrimination towards self-identified trans* people is discrimination based on sex and medical conditions as per the Canadian Human Rights Act (p.1). The employment program sector is required to remain cognizant of these laws and provide accommodation to self-identified trans* people in their employment programs. A step in assessing the employment programs that are

currently offered is to determine if the program had initially completed a needs evaluation of people that access its services and if a needs evaluation was completed specifically to the needs of self-identified trans* people. Harder and Scott advised that "the needs evaluation is carried out prior to the formation of the programme in order to identify what the current state of affairs are and what the actual needs are" (p.152). Furthermore, Dyck (2009) ascertained that the purpose of a DM program's "education and training is to create awareness around the need for and value afforded by workplace-based attendance and Disability Management Programs" (p.611).

As sex and gender identity do not equate to the same, the B.C. Human Rights Code (1996) does not explicitly protect people based on their gender identity. However, in terms of sex identity for people who have transitioned from one sex to another, the B.C. Human Rights Code does prohibit discrimination. Section 11 of the B.C. Human Rights Code currently states that employment advertisements cannot be published showing discrimination towards a person's sex unless the reason is for a bona fide occupational requirement. Section 12 (1) of the Code presently stipulates that employers cannot discriminate against an employee by paying them a lower rate of pay based on their sex. Section 13(1) (a) of the Code prohibits anyone refusing to employ or terminate employment of a person based on their sex. Additionally Section 13 (1) (b) states that employment must be free of sex discrimination. (*British Columbia Human Rights Code*, R.S.B.C. 1996)

Despite there being no specific mention of protection from gender identity discrimination, the British Columbia Human Rights Coalition (n.d.) did release an information booklet, for people who are new to British Columbia. They created the booklet in collaboration with the B.C. Government and the Government of Canada. The booklet stated that B.C.'s Human

Rights Code protects transgender people from discrimination, though 'transgender' is listed under sexual orientation and not under gender.

In a letter to Spencer Chandra Herbert, Member of the Legislative Assembly, the words of Morgane Oger, the chair of the Trans Alliance Society, clearly addressed how the onus should not be on self-identified trans* people to lodge a complaint against the employer and rather that the BC Human Rights Code should be amended instead. Oger's letter was in regards to how the B.C. Human Rights Code does not clearly protect people from discrimination for their gender presentation and gender identity. Oger (2014, November) stated:

> It is unfair to ask people to start a human rights complaint every time an employer discriminates unknowingly. It is unfair to ask somebody to challenge police on their actions when the officer doing an infraction is unaware of the subtleties of the law in this regard. It is simply wrong to ask marginalized persons to advocate for their basic human rights. The BC Human Rights Code must be amended to explicitly include gender identity and gender presentation as protected classifications in the BC Human Rights Code.

Population

My research population was primarily self-identified trans* people who required or do require employment supports. I used the term 'self-identified' to encourage participants to self-identify as my research population. Self-identification can foster empowerment and reject labels that are assigned by the majority population. The most common label that is assigned by the majority population occurs with gender assignment at birth. Empowerment through self-identification is especially true for people who have completed the transition process as they might not feel comfortable being referred to as 'trans*' and for some people the term 'trans*' is

not a label they will ever identify with, even if they have taken steps towards transitioning. I used the term 'trans*' as an all-encompassing umbrella term in reference to people who are two-spirit, transsexual, transgender, gender-queer, gender non-conforming, transitioning, transitioned, etc. However, I understand that "due to the fluidity and politics of insider/outsider usage, it is of utmost importance to honour the preferences of the person rather than assume any static 'official' definition" (Burdge, 2007, as cited in Johnson & Lewisa, 2011, p.117).

The secondary population for this study included two stakeholder groups. The stakeholder group consisted of employment program staff and people who work in organizations that offer support to self-identified trans* people. It was imperative to include their perspectives as they deliver the programs and can witness first-hand the successes and struggles of people who access their services.

Location

This study focused on Vancouver, B.C. due to the reasons previously outlined regarding needs specific to Vancouver. My reason for focusing on Vancouver is it has a reputation for being a multi diverse city with recognition for queer supports and it has a large queer community. This is supported through its representation in the media including coverage of Vancouver as having the 5th largest pride parade on an international level (Green Party of Canada, 2012). My focus on Vancouver was also due to my knowledge base about available programs and resources. Additionally, my selection was based on Vancouver being a metropolitan city, which I used as a focal point to compare and contrast to other metropolitan cities during this study's literature review.

Chapter Five: Ideology

Epistemological Position

Throughout my research I remained cognizant of my own epistemological position as discussed by Gilbert and Pope (1983, p.193-194). My epistemological position was rooted in my identity and experiences. I am a white, queer, middle class woman born into the body and gender that I identify as without having to undergo medical procedures, emotional strain, and mental stress to become my desired sex or gender. My history of activism in the queer community is not extensive, however; my history did fuel my desire to do this research. My two most significant roles were as a member of Bent Umbrella's Academics committee and I was the Director of Hospitality when the International Drag King Community Extravaganza was hosted in Vancouver. This conference "celebrates the mutability and performance of gender" (International Drag King Community Extravaganza, n.d., "Philosophy"). Additionally, I worked for the B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation for five years and a key component of my work involved employment plan management and employment program referrals. With my combined experience in the social assistance field and education in the disability management field, my research explored the participants' views to "best convey the trends and voices" (Creswell, p.121) of this study's population.

Othering

Harper, Jernewall, and Zea (2004) argued that there are intersections between different forms of oppression, including transphobia. It was imperative that I recognized my epistemological position and privilege within these intersections to prevent 'othering'. Othering means how we perceive others as different from ourselves (Weis, 1995 as cited in Canales, 2000, p.18) through representation. Mohan (2001) articulated that there are two meanings for representation as "representation can mean 'speaking of' - constructing accounts and writing texts - or it can mean 'speaking for' - advocating and mediating" (p.6). Othering can be either

inclusionary, as in it utilizes "power within relationships for transformation and coalition building" (Canales, 1998, as cited in Canales, p.19) or exclusionary, as in it "often uses the power within the relationships for domination and subordination" (Weis, 1995, as cited in Canales, p.18).

Priestley and Stone (1996) argued that researchers should accept their expertise as researchers whilst accepting their participants' "expertise as *knowers"* (p.22). To prevent othering, I used Creswell (2009)'s recommendation of member checking (p.191) by requesting that my participants review my data and insure that my findings accurately demonstrated their perspectives. Though I was not able to contact all of my participants to review their quotes and their shared knowledge after transcribing their interviews due to lack of response or an inability to locate new contact information, I did review interviews with five participants to diminish othering.

Chapter Six: Methodology

I used qualitative methodology with my research sample by conducting one to one interviews with participants with three different question sets depending on which research population they identified as.

Theoretical perspectives

As previously mentioned, the primary theoretical perspective I used was queer theory. Creswell (2009) defined queer theory as theory that "focuses on individuals calling themselves lesbians, gays, bisexuals or transgendered people" (p.62). Gamson (2000) specified that research that uses queer theory does so with the intention to not objectify the participants (as cited in Creswell, p.62). Alternatively, queer theory attempts to convey participants' voices and is concerned with cultural and political issues (as cited in Creswell, p.62).

I was aware of Butler's (2003) argument that gender is used as a means to relate to others and that it is "a way of being for another or by virtue of another" (p.13). I understand this statement to be that gender is performative or reactionary based on interactions with other people and their expectations. I maintain that gender is socially constructed in terms of gender roles. However, my standpoint is that gender identity should not solely be rendered to social construction as I also agree with Butler's secondary point that people's bodies are their own and that as people with self-determination "we are entitled to claim rights of autonomy over our bodies" (p.15). Butler stressed this importance for trans* claims for self-determination (p.15).

Additionally, according to Raymond (2003) queer theory differentiates from gay and lesbian studies, including with the use of the term 'queer', which is open-ended and welcomes fluidity as opposed to fixed labels while rejecting binaries. Raymond expounded by stating that "queer theory reads queerness throughout the culture and not simply as a fixed, clearly demarcated category" (p.98). The need for recognition of fluidity directly pertained to research question concerning how people's ideals regarding the final phase of their transition is subject to change due to the fluidity of gender, sex and people's health needs.

The secondary theoretical perspective I used was the health sciences perspective. Fafard (2008) defined the health sciences perspective "as a perspective that adopts and adapts a linear, problem-solving approach to public policy" (p.4). According to Polgar and Thomas (2013) "health research is a systemic and principled way of obtaining evidence (data, information) for solving health care problems and investigating health issues" (p.3). Though my research utilized qualitative interviews to obtain evidence based on experiences and did not seek to "produce scientifically valid knowledge" as stipulated by Polgar and Thomas (p.9), I remained cognizant of the possibility that this study could positively impact the health and well-being of self-

identified trans* people. My decision to use this perspective was based on my intent to understand the medical toll transitioning has on a person while recognizing concerns of class, racism and gender as a means to positively influence public programs. Both theoretical perspectives informed my analysis.

Sampling and Recruitment

My research population consisted of the following: employment program staff; self-identified trans* people in Vancouver who require or who have required employment supports; self-identified trans* people in Vancouver who might already be connected to an employment program or who have completed an employment program; and community organizations that provide services to the self-identified trans* population. As I conducted a qualitative inquiry into the experiences of my participants, my target sample size was 10 people, which I obtained. This decision was based on Patton (2001) who stipulated that typically the researcher "focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases (n=1), selected purposefully" (p.230). Therefore, I used a criterion sample to purposefully obtain participants who self-identified as trans* and required/require trans* supports, in addition to those who work in the employment program or trans* support field. As discussed by Patton, the defining factor of criterion sampling is for the researcher to examine cases that meet a predetermined set of criteria (p.238). Patton argued that the purpose of this type of sampling is to locate cases that are "likely to be information rich because they may reveal major system weaknesses that become targets of opportunity for program or system improvement" (p.238). I approached employment programs and trans* support agencies to obtain participants. When I approached groups as a whole with my request for participation, individuals might have felt more inclined and at ease to participate if my research was recognized as valuable by the organization. When I obtained approval from

the organizations, I then requested assistance with advertising to people who accessed their services and staff. To illustrate, I asked an organization that represented one of my interest groups to circulate my recruitment advertisement through their email distribution list. Another example of the assistance that organizations provided was posting my advertisements in areas that were visible to potential participants.

Recruitment level. A possible barrier to the success of my research was low recruitment. My intention was to obtain my sample through contacting trans* specific organizations and employment programs. If there was a low response rate, I anticipated broadening my recruiting strategies by advertising through social media sites and online postings.

I contacted 34 organizations with my request to circulate my recruitment advertisements. Of the 33 places contacted, 17 did not respond. Unfortunately, I did not receive responses from organizations that work primarily with two-spirit people, immigration service organizations and from some employment programs. I did post recruitment advertisements on a classifieds website. Though I was contacted by two people through the classifieds website, they specifically stated they did not identify as any of this study's population groups. One primary trans* support organization explained that they receive too many research requests and another did not respond to my requests. However, many organizations were incredibly supportive and played an instrumental part in securing participants for this study. The Trans Alliance Society and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre provided great assistance. The Health Initiative for Men agreed to a research partnership and Vancouver Coastal Health granted their own ethics approval. Both processes were required to circulate recruitment material at these organizations. The process for the Health Initiative for Men required a research engagement application. Once approved, a practicum student provided valuable assistance by contacting staff, people who

accessed Health Initiative for Men's services and other agencies about this study. The process for Vancouver Coastal Health required that my University of Northern British Columbia supervisor, Dr. Henry Harder, apply and be approved as an affiliated investigator. I then submitted an ethics application specific to the requirements of Vancouver Coastal Health's Research Institute and obtained approval.

Retention and inadequate sample size. A second obstacle that related to my sample was retention and inadequate sample size. I was aware that respondents might have had multiple barriers related to the social issues that I previously detailed in my section on 'need'. I anticipated that these barriers could affect their ability to attend the interviews. Although there was no age restriction for participation, the age of my respondents could have affected retention. Williamson, et al. (2010) identified that "engaging young people in research around sensitive and personal issues is difficult" (p.174). To address low retention, I attempted to accommodate my participants to the best of my ability by being readily available to interview as soon as I received contact and as soon as it was feasible. Cameron (2007) noted in his study that he had to revise his methods due to lack of retention and response (p.70). Initially, response rates were low, the sample size was poor and I was prepared to modify my sample size; however, with time I was able to achieve saturation with 10 participants.

One of the reasons why this study might have had retention issues was illustrated in an organization's response to my advertisement circulation request. One organization in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside had concerns regarding literacy barriers and the organization was not comfortable with having a researcher interview in-person due to the type of services provided and due to renovations. The organization explained that the people who utilize their services do not have phone or computer access. Though some of my participants made contact

after seeing my recruitment advertisements at other organizations and did mention that they also accessed services from the organization that had these concerns, phone and internet access did pose a problem with recruitment and retention. To illustrate, three people who showed interest in participating left messages with support agencies as the contact number to reach them. Unfortunately, after repeated attempts, I was not able to reach them. Additionally, interviewing one of the three people would have been a conflict of interest as I had provided them service through my previous position with the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. One person called and emailed with interest. Though we set-up a time to meet in-person, the person did not show up and did not reconnect. After I completed my interviews and I was in the final stages of my study in November, 2014, I was contacted by two additional people. I was grateful for their interest; however, I was unable to interview them due to being in the final stages of my analysis and already attaining my targeted sample of 10 participants.

During the debriefing and member checking stage lack of contact methods also created an issue. Some participants did not have phones or email addresses when I interviewed them and they connected for the interviews through other participants that did have access. After the interviews, I was not able to reconnect for the debriefings. Additionally, following the interviews, some members' phones were no longer in service.

Qualitative Methodology

I conducted qualitative interviews from a transformative participatory approach. My decision to use qualitative inquiry was based on a multitude of reasons.

Reasoning. Creswell (2009) articulated that a researcher's preferred methodology choice is strongly influenced by the researcher's personal experiences (p.19). One of my reasons for

selecting qualitative methods was a result of my previous and current employment positions which require that I interview people.

Due to the importance of conveying personal experience through narrative research, as stressed by Creswell (p.3), and due to the sensitive nature of this topic, qualitative research methods provided participants with a platform to share their own interpretations of their needs and experiences. My decision to use qualitative methods, and not mixed methodology, was because descriptive accounts from my participants provided detailed personal interpretations of their experiences allowing for further analysis, including potential future quantitative analyses. Since I have been unable to locate any prior studies in this field within a Vancouver context, my qualitative findings will hopefully provide a conceptual framework that can be further analyzed. Sofaer's (1999) work validated my decision as Sofaer argued that some researchers use qualitative methods for theory development, refinement, and for testing theories (p.1104). My reasoning for not using quantitative methods was they do not consistently support the understanding of dynamic and multifaceted "wholes" (Patton, 1975 as cited in Sofaer, p.1102). The most important attribute of qualitative methods, as noted by Sofaer, is "they allow people to speak in their own voice, rather than conforming to categories and terms imposed on them by others" (p.1105). This was an extremely significant point for this study as my participants could have self-identified with different sexes and genders or there was a possibility that they did not identify with any form of sex or gender. It would have been highly unacceptable to label my participants' genders and sexes based on my own assumptions. Cruz (2002) contended that the very essence of 'gender' is as an "organizing principle" that humans use to perceive other humans (p.1006). My role as a researcher was to request from my participants how they perceived themselves and not perpetuate socially constructed labels.

Data collection. I conducted one-to-one interviews with participants from all groups of this study's population. I offered to hold these interviews in-person or over the telephone. If a participant was uncomfortable with either of these options, I would have proposed the alternative of anonymously participating through online communication, such as Skype or Gmail chat. Coutts and Jann (2011) discussed the benefit of respondents participating anonymously online to prevent inaccurate responses due to fear of social undesirability (p.12). However, all of the participants requested to meet in-person. When given the different options that were available for participation, one respondent explained that she prefers real life interactions as opposed to the internet or phone. Another participant voiced this as her reason as well. This was to be expected as face-to-face interactions have social benefits, such as honesty (Beauregard, Citera, & Mitsuya, 2005; Northcraft, & Rockmann, 2008; Bazerman, Moag, & Valley, 1998; as cited in Kray & Van Zant, 2014, p.234) and this method hopefully gained the trust of my participants.

As suggested by Trochim (2006b) my study measures consisted of only informal language and I remained respectful of my participants' worldviews. Additionally, my questions were brief and specific.

Krumpal and Näher (2012) explained how to reduce social desirability bias through a loading strategy when a researcher poses a sensitive question (p.1602). Sudman and Bradburn (1982) and Groves et al. (2004) defined a loading strategy as a method that researchers use to create questions with words that encourage the respondents to answer more truthfully to sensitive questions (as cited in Krumpal & Näher 2012, p.1602). My loading strategy consisted of asking questions that were neutral in tone and direct.

Generate Shared Knowledge

Throughout my research, I implemented a Knowledge Transfer (KT) strategy to

collaboratively generate knowledge with my participants and to further strengthen the credibility of my findings.

Knowledge transfer. I considered KT to be a critical component of my study. As defined by Swartz (2006), KT occurs with "the focused, unidirectional communication of knowledge between individuals, groups, or organizations such that the recipient of knowledge (a) has a cognitive understanding, (b) has the ability to apply the knowledge, or (c) applies the knowledge" (as cited in Paulin & Sunneson, 2012, p.82). The KT strategy that I implemented was the stakeholder engagement strategy as The Change Foundation (2010) identified it as an effective strategy (p.1).

Stakeholders. Graham and Logan (2004) explained that an important component of the stakeholder engagement strategy is stakeholder identification as individuals and organizations could potentially act as agents when gathering and disseminating findings (p.95). Stakeholder groups can take the form of agencies (Grayet et al., 1996, as cited in Miles, 2012, p.288); employees; governments; financial institutions; and communities (Gamble & Kelly, 2001, p. 111-117). Graham and Logan (2004) and Santesso and Tugwell (2006) expressed the importance of researchers conducting in-depth assessments of their stakeholders' capabilities, motivation for working in their field and knowledge. For trans* specific agencies, I reviewed the services they offered and their mandate. For participants who reported working in organizations that provide support to self-identified trans* people, they outlined the services they provide. For employment programs staff, they provided their experiences in the employment program and disability management field. For my participants who self-identified as trans* people, this self-identification reflected their motivation and knowledge about their own experience.

All stakeholder groups were vital to gathering information by circulating my advertisements during the recruitment stage. Additionally both participant groups and organizations requested final copies of this study to share internally and externally. To illustrate, one participant, Sabina, explained that her reason for wanting a completed copy of this study was because "... it would be nice to have it here to refer to for the staff. A sort of like: Look! This is a study worth checking out."

Engagement. As a researcher, I prepared to overcome the challenging task that organizations occasionally encounter when solidifying relationships "across disciplines to stimulate integrative, multifaceted research agendas that respond to society's health priorities while adhering to the highest ethical standards (Tetroe, 2007, p.1). This challenge applies equally to independent researchers as communities and stakeholders are integral players in a successful study. I anticipated that all groups would have varying degrees of invested interest and engagement, depending on the "nature of the research results and on the needs of the particular stakeholder" (Tetroe, p.2). There were varying degrees of interest and engagement throughout the interviews and with responses from organizations to my recruitment requests; however, all organizations did so based on the best interests of their service populations.

With KT engagement, the community might actively be engaged to a high degree in the community participation continuum where the community directs the research from the beginning or the researcher might not engage the community to any extent (Gardner, Liamputtong & McGartland, 2003, p.39). Gardner, et al. stipulated that when a researcher involves community participation, the researcher is held to a higher degree of accountability and transparency (p.12). By requesting the involvement of the self-identified trans* community, support agencies and employment programs in my research process, I expected and did gain

valuable resources and information to assist with this study. As no agencies instructed that I complete this research, the level of KT engagement that I used was community and stakeholder advising. To illustrate, one organization expressed a concern for the suffix 'ed' at the end of the words 'two-spirit' and 'transgender' in my advertisements. The staff member pointed out that by removing the suffix the recruitment material was more current, respectful, and inclusive. Though some literature shows that the 'ed' suffix is still preferred by some people for their own self-identification (Irving & Raj, 2014, p.127; McLeod, Robinson, Williams & Wilson, 2014), GLAAD's (2014) stance mirrored that of the staff member and it was a great opportunity to reflect and expand on my knowledge. GLAAD stated on their website that the term 'transgender' should not have the suffix because it adds unnecessary length, leads to tense confusion, and can result in grammar mistakes. GLAAD also pointed out that omitting the 'ed' brings the identity terms into alignment with other identities that would also not have 'ed' as a suffix, such as lesbian or gay. As a result, I changed the participant recruitment material and made note to update my terminology throughout my research.

Ali, Crome, and Roffe (2006) explained that researchers will benefit from "consumer involvement in the early stages of planning research" (p.865). Health Canada (2012) highlighted that knowledge has the highest value when the researcher delivers the information at the point of use and recommendation (p.4). During the initial stages of my research, I implemented KT processes during the integration stage (Tetroe, p.6) in order to garner continuous interest and input from invested parties. In healthcare research, Grant-Pearce, Hills, and Miles (1998) noted the necessity of consultations because there is evidence that shows that patients' and clinicians' agendas can differentiate (as cited in Ali, Crome, & Roffe, p.865). For my study, I remained transparent and reviewed the intentions of this study with the participants prior to the interviews

as my means to determine if my goals were shared with my participants. For example, in addition to reviewing the information and consent forms with the participants, I also showed the questions that I asked prior to starting the interviews.

Debriefing stage. During the final stages of my analysis, I made efforts to remain aware of how I presented my findings by keeping my audience in mind as cautioned by Tetroe (p.2). I confirmed with the participants my understanding of the information they shared both during the interviews and also during debriefing sessions for the participants I was able to reconnect with. Failing to do so could have resulted in alienating all stakeholders from supporting my research or any of my future studies. Furthermore, Olsen, Toy, and Wright (1989) supported the use of educational debriefing sessions as these sessions can create positive feelings for participants regarding their participation and the study (p.74). The intent behind the debriefing sessions was to allow participants an opportunity to discuss their participation experiences, to ask any questions that might have arose after the interviews, to advise them of any themes that appeared throughout their interviews and to clarify any details. Debriefing sessions were not always possible if participants did not provide a phone number or email. To illustrate, one participant requested that I contact her through the email address of her friend, who was another participant. However, when I contacted her friend they had not communicated in the past few weeks. As a result, I was unable to debrief with this participant on her experience as a participant and I was unable to review any themes and quotes obtained from her interview.

In interviews where running themes were apparent, I discussed these themes with the participants whose knowledge created these themes. KT will also occur when I disseminate my research findings as discussed by Graham and Logan (2004, p.98-99). I intend to disseminate my findings when this study is published. Once my study is published, I will give copies to all

stakeholders and participants who provided the details of where their copy can be sent to and I will give them notice of my thesis defence date. Additionally, I will submit my research to interested organizations.

Rigour

To increase the rigour of this study, I established auditability, truth value, and applicability.

Auditability. Researchers can attain auditability by following the recommendations made by Ryan-Nicholls and Will (2009). To ensure auditability for this study I adhered to the following recommendations:

1) A description of my study purpose;
2) My interest in this subject;
3) The basis of my participant selection and how I recruited them; and
4) A description of my data collection methods. (p.79- 80)

Truth value. As defined by Krefting (1991), "truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by the informants" (p.215). This stage is referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as credibility (as cited in Krefting, p.215). To ensure credibility, I took certain measures. For the participants I was able to reconnect with after their interviews, I requested that they review a summary of responses, either electronically or I read the summary over the phone. I also requested that they review my analysis of their contributions to insure accuracy. As Creswell (2009) advised, I checked my transcripts for accuracy during this stage (p.190-192). In retrospect, it would have strengthened this study's truth value to have scheduled pre-arranged meetings with the participants to ensure that I could debrief with all people who participated, and not just the 5 people I was able to reconnect with.

In addition, based on Creswell's suggestions, I was cognizant of any bias I might hold as a result of my epistemological position, acknowledged any negative information (p.192), and I used rich thick descriptions of my findings (p.191).

Applicability. As common with qualitative research, I intended for my research to reflect the diversity of my participants' experiences as discussed by Kuzel (1992) as opposed to being generalizable (as cited in Barbour, 2001, p.1115). Therefore, instead of attempting to obtain generalizability, I attempted to attain applicability through potential transferability (Trochim, 2006a). Guba (1981) referred to transferability as the "criterion against which applicability of qualitative data is assessed" (as cited in Krefting, p. 216). To achieve applicability, this study presented descriptive data in order for another person or researcher to use my findings for another intended purpose. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that it is the responsibility of the other person or researcher to determine whether my findings are transferable for their intended purpose (as cited in Krefting, p. 216).

Ethics

As a researcher, I made provisions to decrease any potential ethical issues. Prior to starting my research with participants, I submitted my proposal to the UNBC Research Ethics Board for review (UNBC, n.d., p. 1) and my application was approved. Additionally, I submitted a separate ethics application to Vancouver Coastal Health for approval in order to circulate my recruitment advertisements through their services. The following ethical considerations were applicable to this study: consent, selection, risk of harm, anonymity, and form of participation (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, et al., 2005, i.5-i.6: Trochim, 2006).

Consent. I did not intentionally use any form of deception. I provided participants the informed consent forms and information letters (UNBC, 2011, p.1) and I reviewed the forms

with them prior to starting the interviews. The information letters provided clear explanations of the purpose and the goals of this study (UNBC, p.1). Additionally, the letter detailed the procedures and any risks associated with participating in this study (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, et al., i.5-i.6).

Selection. To prevent any misrepresentation regarding the purpose of this study, the information letter advised respondents that participant selection was based on their own self-identification as this study's research population for a specific study purpose. This was imperative as Pierce (2008) warned that "misrepresentation of the study purpose at the outset raises significant questions about the validity of the consent and a myriad of downstream ethical concerns" (p.265).

Risk of harm. Though I did not anticipate any physical risks for my participants, I recognized that there were potential psychological risks. Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2011) articulated that "the psychological effects of research need to be considered carefully" and that the effects can include "upsetting people or exposing them to uncomfortable questions" (p. 303). To reduce any potential harm, I provided participants with information on free counselling supports, such as those offered through Qmunity, which is the organization that offered the trans* workshop in Vancouver in February, 2014 (Qmunity, n.d.). I provided a copy of the letter from Qmunity to participants outlining their ability to access these supports.

Anonymity and confidentiality. Walford (2005) explained that confidential information is any information that the researcher obtains and cannot share. Walford argued that researchers generate information from participants in order to analyze and pass it on to other people (p.83). To prevent other people from being able to identify who the participants are based on their responses, I omitted the name of the organizations where participants worked and I confirmed

with the participants which information they wanted shared. Regarding anonymity, I did not request the full names of the participants. If participants included their full names on the information and consent forms, this was done of their own volition and full names were not disclosed to anyone other than myself. I provided the participants with the option of using an alias. However, though the option was there, most participants requested to use their first names during the interviews and requested to have their first names used in this study. I ensured that all identifying information I obtained would be confidential even to other parties involved in the study. I retained all hardcopy confidential documents in a secure location (in a locked safe at home) and my laptop was password protected. Furthermore, I was the only one who reviewed the data. Six months after I have written my thesis, I will destroy all confidential hardcopy papers through paper shredding. Additionally, I will erase all computer files, and audio recordings.

Form of participation. All participation was voluntary. As per UNBC requirements, I advised participants that they have the right to withdraw themselves and their information from my research at any time (UNBC, 2011, p.1). Prior to starting the interviews, I provided the participants with their 15 dollar honorarium and assured them that they could withdraw from the study even before starting the interview without forfeiting the honorarium. It was necessary that participants knew that if they wanted to terminate their involvement in the study that they could without any expectation.

Chapter Seven: Interviews

I confirmed the use of pronouns and preferred names with participants regardless of whether they self-identified as trans* or as another of the participant groups. I advised all of the

participants that I would be contacting them at a later date through their preferred method of communication, such as by email or by phone, for debriefing.

Participant Introductions

Self-identified trans* participants. Out of ten people interviewed for this study, five people self-identified as trans*. The five people were Leslie, Sandy, Shayna, Chanel, and Ryan. Of the five participants, four used the pronouns she, hers, and her. One participant used the pronouns he, him, and his. Two participants self-identified as trans. One participant self-identified as both two-spirit and trans. One participant self-identified as transgender and one participant self-identified as male with a trans history.

Chanel. Chanel self-identifies as transgender and two-spirit. She stated she has not experienced any barriers to employment. She stated that she is currently employed part-time as a peer educator for people in the sex trade and is satisfied with the employment she has obtained. Chanel advised that she has never attended any employment programs and therefore cannot comment on any negative or positive experiences in employment programs. Nevertheless, she provided valuable data for this study.

Shayna. Shayna self-identifies as transgender. She said she is unemployed and has experienced barriers to employment. Shayna had not attended an employment program in Vancouver; however, she did access an employment program in Winnipeg.

Ryan. Ryan self-identifies as a male with a trans history, which he stated he is very open about. Ryan explained that he has had barriers to employment and though he works in a variety of different areas, including community work and being an artist, he described himself as being underemployed. Ryan explained that he is also a board member for an organization that provides frontline support to people in the sex trade and he was also a chair of the board for one year.

Though he stated he loves psychology and mental health, Ryan stated that he is starting to "burn out in the Downtown Eastside" and is now focused on working in paramedicine. At the time of his interview, Ryan was in school learning how to be a paramedic. He expressed a definite need for more trans* employees in emergency services and he is hoping to create more trans* visibility in the paramedicine field. Ryan described his reason for entering paramedicine as follows:

> ....an opportunity to create more of a safe environment for trans* people and I know that I know a number of people who have been really hurt by paramedics, who are trans* and have had horrible experiences. And this is my way to continue working in somewhat of a 'social workie' kind of capacity. You know being a point of contact and being that kindness.

Leslie. Leslie self-identifies as trans and as a peer support worker in a sex worker support organization. She explained that she has faced barriers to employment because people have not wanted to hire her because she is trans*. Despite the discrimination, Leslie's strength was evident with her statements such as "the me now would just address everything thanks to my upbringing. Like now I just wouldn't put up with things and I address things on the spot."

Sandy. Sandy self-identifies as trans. Sandy said she has not experienced barriers to employment because of the field she has chosen. She previously worked with children and was a school secretary. Like Chanel and Leslie, at the time of her interview Sandy was employed as a peer support worker for a sex worker support organization.

Staff in organizations that offer trans* supports. There were three participants, June, Dan, and Ann, who represented staff who work for organizations that provide trans* supports. Though the organizations were not specifically for self-identified trans* people, all members of

this participant population explained that self-identified trans* people access their organizations' services.

Dan. Dan works in an agency in the Downtown Eastside. His role is to assist people with donations. In addition to donations, Dan stated the organization also assists people with clothing, support, food, meals, and counselling. In the past 6 months that Dan has worked there, he has had a dozen people who self-identify as trans* access services at this agency. When asked if the people who self-identify as trans* and accessed services have advised him of any barriers to employment, Dan stated that they have advised him that gender identification has been a barrier.

Ann. At the time of her interview, Ann had been volunteering for six to eight months at a sex worker support organization in the Downtown Eastside, which is open to self-identified trans* people. Ann's role consists of answering phones and calls from people who are trained to assist people who access its services. Ann says the place she volunteers at employs several people who self-identify as trans* and for trans* people accessing the agency's services "it seems to be a real open place for them to come and it is comfortable there."

June. When I interviewed June she was in her eighteenth month of working as a peer safety coach in violence prevention for an organization for sex trade workers that also provides trans* supports. June explained that services are offered to all sex workers in the Downtown Eastside. June outlined the services provided as counselling, support work, outreach, harm reduction supplies, assistance with disability applications, violence prevention, and self-confidence boosting. June stated that self-identified trans* people have come in expressing a need for employment supports. She stated employment supports are available from other staff. She also explained that the agency has a free clothing room for job interviews. June noted that there have been approximately a dozen self-identified trans* people who have accessed services

since she has worked there. June stated that in her experience as a safety coach, she has had at least one self-identified trans* person in each violence prevention group.

Employment program staff. Sabina and Sam represented the third population group.

Sabina. Sabina has worked in the employment program field for a total of 15 years with 10 of those years at her current place of employment. Sabina is a case manager who provides job search assistance. She stressed that the employment program she works for empowers job seekers by giving them the tools and knowledge to conduct an effective job search, including providing assistance with applications if people "need to go back to school for any appropriate certificates." Though Sabina does not have specific field training on trans* issues, she self-identifies as a queer woman who accesses workshops on trans* issues. Sabina stated it is important for her that everybody is treated equally and respectfully.

Included in the services offered at the program are resume workshops, interview workshops, career exploration workshops, Employment Insurance funded programs, job search funds, wage subsidy programs, and job search tools, such as free photocopying, faxing, printing, and long distance calls. For people who have a disability designation or who disclose a disability, Sabina's organization assists with customized employment services to help secure part-time or full-time work or exposure to work, such as through a volunteer position.

Since the launch of B.C.'s new employment program model (EPBC) in April, 2012, Sabina estimated that she has had 6 people who self-identified as trans*. Sabina explained that she was surprised that there were not more people who self-identify as trans* who have accessed services and she hypothesized that people might not know about the services they offer or there could be a fear for safety. Regarding the demographic of people Sabina has worked with who self-identified as trans*, she stated the majority are people who self-identify with male pronouns.

Sam. Sam previously worked at the counselling centre at a college. The centre offered both personal and career counselling for all students. Sam's role was to provide career counselling and exploration, as well as general counselling. During her time in her role, she assisted three people who self-identified as trans*.

Summary of Interviews

The themes that arose out of the interviews were finances, medical barriers, sex trade work, confidence building, safety, fear, referral process, elements in current programs that supported success and that hindered success, as well as elements for an inclusive and supportive trans* specific employment program. I arrived at these themes through thematic analysis. Aronson (1994) explained that "thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behavior". While reviewing the transcriptions of the audio recordings I transcribed, I identified any experiences that were noted by more than one participant. I determined that the experiences that occurred with more than one participant as a theme. Identifiers included the use of similar words or situations. To illustrate, I identified the theme "self-confidence" when more than one participant used words such as 'self-confidence', 'low self-esteem', 'lack of confidence', and 'low self-worth'. Many of the themes that materialized through the interviews directly pertained to issues that were discovered during my literature review.

Finances. Sam noted that "often times if a person can secure employment that can alleviate a lot of other stresses and create more of a balance and stability around money, food, eating, housing." Sam recalled one person who was attending the college on student loans. The person expressed their financial anxieties and was concerned about how they were going to support themselves and their partner. When I asked Ryan if he had any other barriers to employment, he explained that he does not have the same financial barriers as before; however,

the cost of tuition for his studies is expensive. Ryan pointed out that "these days it does cost money to get a job..." Ryan also emphasized that not having the funds to change identification is a barrier to employment.

Sandy explained that though she does not have financial barriers, she is one cheque away from not being able to pay for anything. Sandy expressed that most people are in this same financial situation. This was also true for Leslie who said that though when she budgets she is financially stable sometimes her ability to eat healthy food is compromised due to lack of funds.

Previously, Leslie struggled a lot more financially. She explained that being trans* used to be recognized as a disability by social assistance. She was frustrated because she said that being trans* was removed as a disability when there continues to be so many barriers in society for trans* people. Leslie was not optimistic that society will change any time soon and that until it does social assistance should recognize being trans* as a disability. Leslie described her experience as follows:

> I mean for me right now, it doesn't feel like a disability anymore, but when I first went through the stage, the first fucking 15 years were hell. And they were hard. And I could have very much benefitted from being on disability. Like if I was on disability I probably never would have gotten into the sex trade because I only went into the sex trade because I needed more money and no one wanted to hire me because I was a freak, I guess. That is what I thought. Well, that is what other people made me feel that I was. That I didn't fit in.

Sabina included finances as a barrier to anyone who needs to secure employment. In her experience, Sabina observed that the self-identified MTF people who have accessed the program were notably job ready. In contrast, Sabina noted that FTM people have expressed more anxiety

and barriers. She explained that the FTM people she has worked with were experiencing financial pressure to secure a job while often ignoring anxiety and personal healing instead of addressing it.

Employment. Regarding satisfaction with her current employment, Sandy stated she is ok with it, however, not completely satisfied as her goal is to return to her reserve and work with the elders. Sandy expanded by saying that there are few people in her age group that can speak her language with the elders and that the people in her mother's age group that could speak the language are passing away.

June contended that there is a whole variety of people who self-identify as trans* and there is a lack of trans* visibility employment. She expressed that it is necessary for people to have equal opportunity. She elaborated and said that for self-identified trans* people who work in the Downtown Eastside it is hard to obtain employment.

Leslie was very satisfied with being a peer worker. Leslie stated "I mean I have employment now, but if I didn't have an understanding employer then I probably wouldn't have a job right now." However, the peer worker position is a temporary position because the program only hires people for three years. She expressed sadness about leaving, nonetheless she said that with her leaving her position this will give another person the opportunity to have a similar positive experience.

In regards to being underemployed, Ryan clarified that he works at organizations where people are on-call, which is why he is underemployed. However, he explained that community organizations are the best types of employers for self-identified trans* people and therefore, there are a lot of LGBT[4] people who work there.

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[4] LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans*.

Ryan said he secured employment with community organizations because of his history and they were looking for people who were trans*. His lived experience led to a position working for a support and outreach organization run for self-identified male and trans* sex workers by self-identified male and trans* people who have experience in the sex trade. Ryan did outreach with both male and trans* self-identified exploited youth and sex workers in Vancouver. Ryan's experiences show the value of community. He secured the position at the organization after being approached by a staff member who discussed the services that this organization offers. This later led to a future friendship with this staff member and collaboration between this organization and other organizations that Ryan has worked for. Ryan stressed the importance of employers who embrace the history of trans* people. In the case of this organization, Ryan explained that they hire people based on their life experiences and that this organization also embraced his trans* history. He said they did so by providing "a warm, welcoming, loving environment", which he explained is normally absent in a work environment. He stated that he continues to feel welcome as there are still opportunities for him to volunteer at this organization.

Employment discrimination. Shayna reported being discriminated against for being transgender. When reflecting on the job application process prior to starting her transition, Leslie said it was easier because no one asked her personal questions and she did not experience the same level of difficulty that she does now with obtaining employment. At one position in a retail store, staff would not use her preferred pronoun and her employer was not supportive. Eventually, in frustration Leslie told staff "you know what? If you can't accept me as she, then just call me by my name. Don't use a pronoun. If you can't accept the 'she', then just call me Leslie." After that, some staff started to call her Leslie and yet some continued to refer to her

with male pronouns. She also described how customers treated her by bringing in their friends and saying "Oh look there is a tranny that works at [name of store]." As a result of this environment, Leslie stated that she left the position after two months four years ago and has not had a mainstream job since.

Alternatively, Sandy had not experienced workplace discrimination as a peer worker and Sabina had not had any self-identified trans* people report to her that they have had difficulty with employers. Regarding discrimination in the workplace for self-identifying as trans*, Chanel clarified that though she had not experienced discrimination from co-workers, she had been discriminated against by people accessing services. She stated this discrimination had not affected her ability to look for work.

Ann contended that she considers there to be more acceptance from people towards self-identified trans* people compared to in the past. In response to whether trans* people who access services from the agency she volunteers at have expressed a need for employment supports, Ann stated she believes that by the time they come to her agency "they have been through everything. They just need support. They need someone to talk to."

Ryan detailed two significant incidents of trans* discrimination. Nevertheless, his strength was apparent, like in the cases of the employer who reduced his hours and another employer who changed his work shifts when he started taking hormones. In the example of the employer who reduced his hours, Ryan described how he fought the employer and won a settlement. Ryan was working at a café in Vancouver for over a year when he had his hysterectomy. Due to the surgery, he had to have modified work duties in order to heal. However, instead of his employer providing him with modified work duties, Ryan's work schedule was cut down to only one hour per week. He questioned why the employer made this

decision and they fired him. Ryan contacted B.C.'s Employment Standards Branch who supported him by contacting the employer and giving them the option of going to court or settling. In the end, Ryan accepted the settlement.

Ryan described another incident from 2004 where he experienced work place discrimination when he was a security guard in Winnipeg. He had secured a day position and was promoted to a supervisor position. Ryan explained that he was open with his co-workers about his decision to start transitioning, then management changed and the building where he worked acquired new ownership. Ryan stated that management became aware that he started hormones and his voice started to change. In response, management changed his schedule to 12 hour night shifts because they told him "they didn't feel people needed to see that." After being demoted from his position as supervisor, Ryan walked off of the job site. Ryan spoke to the solidarity that his co-workers who identified as queer displayed because they too walked off the job in his support.

After walking off the job site in Winnipeg, Ryan moved to Vancouver where he worked in day labour jobs and went to school. Ryan stated that around that time he was hospitalized due to having a bi-polar disorder. Ryan continued to write as an artist, however, he was unable to work in other capacities while he went in and out of the hospital. As a result, his medical condition left him initially with social assistance and later disability social assistance as his forms of income.

Intersectionality of race/ethnicity and gender. Shayna stated that she faces social barriers and discrimination because of her identity. When I asked Shayna if she had ever experienced discrimination in the workplace, she stated that she was discriminated against in a previous workplace due to her being a person who is both native and transgender. She stated that

her ability to look for work was impacted by the discrimination that she encountered in her previous workplace. Leslie also experienced racism with people saying derogatory comments regarding her being Aboriginal.

Sam described how one person would get pegged as a different race and then not their preferred gender. She explained that the person reported they had encountered discrimination due to racial stereotypes and how some employers would not hire them because of their perceived race and gender. Sam also noted there were judgments about the person's ability to be assertive because of race and gender stereotypes. Although Sam noted that one person who was transitioning from female to male encountered discrimination, she observed the most prominent discrimination as that towards trans-feminine people.

Medical. Sam reported that she provided assistance to a person who self-identified as trans* and who had mental wellness issues resulting from trauma. Sabina explained that some of her non-cisgender clients disclosed mental health issues, addiction, and childhood abuse as barriers to employment. Sabina distinguished that self-identification as trans* is unrelated to these barriers. Sabina emphasized that cisgender people also face these barriers because the experience of unemployment is like being on a rollercoaster. She elaborated on this by stating that for many of her self-identified trans* clients "it is not the transitioning that's the barrier but it's the accompanying anxiety or you know the trust issues from childhood. Or maybe the addictions and being afraid of relapsing. The fear of looking for a job because they may relapse again into the addiction."

Dan stated that he had observed drug addiction as another barrier. For medical conditions, Leslie explained that she did have prior addiction issues. Leslie also listed psychological wellness issues and how the effects of taking hormones for her transition impacted

her mental health, in addition to leading to fatigue. She stopped taking hormones because of the effects on her mental health, which was not a problem when not on hormones.

Ryan disclosed the medical conditions that have been barriers to his employment as having post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), being in recovery and having a now stabilized Bi-Polar Type II disorder. Ryan described how negative health care experiences affected his ability to secure and maintain employment because the ignorance of some of the health care providers he encountered created detrimental effects to his health. He depicted an incident where a doctor performed a surprise genital exam on him and questioned his sex life for no apparent purpose. This led to Ryan lodging a complaint. Ryan recounted how this incident triggered his PTSD and he was unable to work for a couple of months following it. Ryan expresses the weight that these experiences with some medical professionals can have on the lives of self-identified trans* people.

Shayna stated she does not know if she has any medical barriers to employment. Additionally, both Chanel and Sandy said they do not have any medical barriers.

Sex trade. In the self-identified trans* population, four people were employed and one person was unemployed. Three self-identified trans* participants stated they worked as peer support workers, staff who have shared experiences in the field of service, for sex workers in the Downtown Eastside. Two participants, from the staff population group that provide services to self-identified trans* people, also stated they worked as peer support workers for sex workers in the Downtown Eastside.

Ann stated that it is difficult for self-identified trans* people to secure regular forms of employment. Consequently, Ann stated she believes there are more self-identified trans* people who are in the sex trade for employment. Ryan said that 15 years ago he was in his late teens and

living in Winnipeg. He explained that during that time he worked as a sex worker. He stipulated that being in the sex trade, in conjunction with previously being homeless, led to numerous barriers to employment.

During the wrap-up stage of her interview, Sabina mentioned attending a sex positive workshop for employment programs where the speaker who self-identified as trans* remarked on the high numbers of self-identified trans* sex workers. However, Sabina indicated that she has not had any people who work in the sex trade.

Support system. Sam explained that self-identified trans* people who accessed the centre's services were the people who did not experience support from their families, professors, and past employers. Sam recalled that 2 out of 3 of the people she "saw who had family support were having more confidence and success. The person who had the least amount of social and familial support I think had the most difficulty, anxiety and fear."

Confidence. A lack of confidence was a resounding theme that was mentioned by the majority of participants from all groups. Though low confidence was a barrier that was not revealed to Sabina, she stated she has detected it as a barrier with trans* people who have accessed services from the organization she works for. Sam noted that one of the people she assisted had self-esteem issues as a result of trauma. Sam explained that because of low self-esteem the person avoided certain types of employment activities, as such as different employers and putting themselves out there "because of the emotional toll of negative experiences..." Sam explained that "not knowing when you are going to have a positive experience kind of relates to not wanting to have that experience at all." Sam noted that one person also had body image issues as a consequence of low self-esteem.

Sandy advised that in her experience self-identified trans* people isolate themselves

because they feel they are expected to or perhaps they isolate themselves due to insecurities. Leslie described how after being rejected by employers numerous times she lost her confidence and this negatively impacted her ability to secure employment. Leslie reported the following:

> Like psychologically, I didn't feel very good. You know after so many 'turn downs' and after looking for months, you just get discouraged. I just felt like I couldn't do it anymore. I was just like: "Maybe the workplace is just not for me anymore and maybe I need something that is more behind the scenes where people wouldn't see me just because I am trans".

As a result of her diminished confidence, Leslie participated in groups and workshops for a long time to build up her self-confidence to arrive at the point where she could work full-time. Shayna explained that she has social barriers, more specifically with communication. She stated that if she is in an environment that does not feel safe and there are people everywhere, then she cannot communicate. This could be accredited to low confidence in addition to safety and fear factors. Ann also observed both self-acceptance and concerns regarding security as barriers to employment for self-identified trans* people.

Fear. Sam recounted the anxiety and fear that people she worked with had. She explained that there was a fear of being outed as trans*, there was fear of violence towards them and there was anxiety around what to wear in relation to professional clothing. Sabina explained that she has observed self-identified trans* people experience fear in regards to job searches. Sabina acknowledged that though she does her best to provide support she knows that when self-identified trans* people who she works with are out doing a job search she never fully knows their experience with the process because she is not trans*.

Safety. Sam reported that one safety concern shared with her was disclosure to employment programs. The self-identified trans* people she assisted also expressed safety concerns with the employment locations. For example, transit was an issue. If there was no direct or late night transit, then this posed safety concerns.

June stated that her friend from the same agency where she works had been attacked for being trans* while working in the sex trade. June also detailed how trans* people who access services from the agency she works at tell her accounts of how people throw stuff at them, such as water, coins, and rocks, when they are working in the sex trade on the streets.

Another point regarding safety that Sam mentioned was whether places were unionized. Workplaces that were unionized or known to be trans* and queer friendly, were more appealing to the trans* people she provided career support to. Ryan also mentioned unions as places that represent safe workplaces when he noted his desire to work for B.C. Ambulance as a union. When asked to clarify why he would prefer to work for a union, Ryan responded by saying even if B.C. Ambulance was not a union, they are still more progressive than other employers in the medical field. Ryan elaborated by stating "I think part of it is there is more safety. And when it is a union there is more opportunity to get heard. And, also unions more so tend to embrace minorities. You are more likely to have rights and to be able to exercise those rights."

Referrals. The topic of referrals to employment programs or from employment programs to other supports was important to this study as it showed how organizations work together to support people who access their services[5].

[5] For a listing of community resources in British Columbia, most of which are located in Vancouver, that provide employment services and/or a variety of services for people who self-identify as trans* refer to Appendix 11.

Sabina explained that when people express a need for counselling she provides them with a listing for free counselling services and they arrange a service provider to conduct a vocational psychological assessment if required. She recalled organizing an assessment conducted by a psychologist for one person who self-identified as trans*. If a person is a new immigrant or is a refugee due to their transition, Sabina refers them to immigrant service providers, who have additional training funds that are accessed separate from the funds available from the agency where Sabina works. If someone reveals they are a survivor of violence and abuse, she can approve 10 in-house free counselling sessions.

Ann stated that the agency she works for provides assistance for self-identified trans* people through referrals to other agencies. In regards to employment programs, Ann explained that she has not had any self-identified trans* people who have accessed services at the agency state that they have attended employment programs. However, she stated if requested, she would connect them with a staff member who could provide assistance with a referral. Dan explained that he has not completed any external referrals. Nonetheless, if a self-identified trans* person expressed a need for support, Dan has referred them to other people who self-identify as trans* as he argued that people who self-identify as trans* would have the most knowledge on what programs would be beneficial. Shayna explicated that she learnt about the program she attended in Winnipeg through her social worker at the time as it was a step in securing a place to live.

For Ryan, there was no formal referral process for the program he attended. Ryan knew a psychologist who worked at the program he attended and advised him to access the program for an assessment.

Concerns with non-tailored employment programs. Sam explained that in the counselling centre where she worked traditional employment counselling material was helpful

for people she assisted even though it did not address barriers specific to employment for trans* people. She had to omit pieces because they did not apply to the previous experiences of the trans* people she was working with. With gender fluidity, Sam had difficulty locating trans* literature because one person was "in an in-between space." She found she was doing a lot of her own research in an attempt to secure trans* employment resources because she found that it is a new field. Sam stated that she found this area to be a huge challenge and that she "felt quite demoralized at times" due to the marginalization of trans* people and a lack of resources. Sam clarified that the frustration that she felt "was nothing compared to watching clients go through a lot of fear, anxiety, discomfort, you know, issues."

Sam did explain that one person told her that they accessed an employment centre and the person did not disclose that they were trans*. Therefore, the staff did not know to tailor the person's work search to their specific fears and historical issues. Basically the services were the equivalent of an online search. The person had to modify all of the supports they received. Sam wondered if maybe the person did not disclose their identity out of fear. Sam also wondered if the person had decided to disclose their identity whether the staff would have had the knowledge on how to offer support specific to the person's needs.

Shayna stated the only employment program she had ever attended was when she lived in Winnipeg as an early teen. Shayna stated she did not encounter any discrimination in this employment program and that there were no negative experiences.

Sabina has made a point of providing feedback to the employment agency where she works because they value improvement and strategic planning. However, she noted there were many areas lacking. She identified a need for staff to learn respectful terminology. Sabina

maintained that not all staff ask people what pronouns they would prefer or how they would like to be addressed.

Sabina pointed out how more education is needed on trans* awareness. Sabina recalled a webinar for staff that was led by a person from the University of British Columbia. She also recalled a seminar workshop for staff that was held out in Richmond; however, she was unable to attend and did not receive a response when she requested follow-up information.

Sabina highlighted the importance of education being offered onsite as opposed to offsite. She would like to see the presenters from the seminar in Richmond come to the employment centre "... and not have people who are comfortable with the community be like: Oh yeah, I'll attend this workshop. But it is like preaching to the converted right? The people that don't know enough about it are the ones that need to come to these workshops. But because it is by choice most of them don't go because they are straight, they are heterosexual, they decide that they don't need to know." Sabina stressed that there are opportunities for training during their staff administration days. She explained that the workshops should not be elective, instead there should be presentations done for staff at each office location as in-house training.

Othering was an issue mentioned by Leslie. In her experience, when programs adopt new policies to support trans* people they signal them out with excessive attentiveness. Leslie elaborated on the ill effect that this type of attentiveness has as follows:

> I don't need ... I may need those things, but those people are not to be able give it to me. The extra little "Oh, you look so beautiful today. How are you?" Like I have problems, but I ... they are not the person to fix it. And usually those kinds of people I would just avoid them. And it would make it kind of awkward in the workplace or employment

program if you are trying to avoid your instructor or your instructor's helper. You don't need to be extra nice to me just because I am different.

Sandy and Chanel both stated that they had not attended an employment program. Ryan indicated that he had no negative employment program experiences.

Supportive elements in current programs. When Sam worked at the college counselling centre, she found that doing research about trans* rights and options for resumes were helpful for one of the people she worked with. She elaborated by saying that material that was written by trans* people was the most helpful because the ideas were based on people's experiences. Most of the time the information was presented by the writers in a blog and it was anecdotal, which was more authentic. Sam explained that when offering ideas as a non-trans* identified person, though the intent was well-meaning, actual shared lived experiences were more valuable. She approached job search assistance for the self-identified trans* people she worked with as providing information around safety and strategy and then weighing together which options were best for them. For one of the people, who was doing a practicum and was already very prepared, one element that was beneficial was increasing their knowledge surrounding how to find potential employers and then strategizing around applying to those employers.

Shayna stated the positive experiences that happened at the employment program in Winnipeg included helping her to remain calmer at job interviews and she created a resume. Shayna stated she was originally in a program to gain housing and was given some funds to do so; however, she did not have enough funds to secure a place. As a result, she had to switch to a new program to help her find work in order to afford a place to live.

Leslie heard about the employment programs she took through word of mouth, through online searches or through other programs. She described how a program in the Vancouver area asked her for her preferred name and pronoun before starting the program. She said she was originally on "pins and needles" and that she was thinking "Oh my god. The teacher is going to yell out my name, my legal name, in front of the whole class and then it is going to instantly set the mood." When the teacher used her preferred name she felt at ease and that set the tone for her success in the program.

Another positive experience that was significant for Leslie was when staff at the employment program provided support when another person in the program used discriminatory language. The person made inappropriate comments to Leslie and the staff addressed this with the person. The person ended up leaving and not returning. Leslie explained that with a shift to government funded employment programs there are policies in place. In regards to one organization that is both located in the Downtown Eastside and not an employment program, Leslie described how the place does not support people who are trans* when they are being discriminated against by other people. Leslie explained that this lack of support resulted in her not wanting to access services from this organization. Another employment program that Leslie accessed was for youth. She described it as having a really inclusive and fun environment, which made it easy to talk to people.

Ryan accessed employment services at a program where he received an assessment to determine if he had a learning disability and to determine if he needed any accommodations for school and work. He described the program as a trans* friendly safe space and stated that at the time that he accessed services there the psychologist had done extensive work in the trans* community in the area of assessments.

The psychologist that Ryan saw checked with him to confirm what information he wanted in his assessment report. He explained that the psychologist asked him "Do you want me to put this in your file? Is it ok? Did you want me to omit the trans thing?" Additionally, Ryan took courses through a program offered by the Centre for Concurrent Disorders. At the program, Ryan had the support of counsellors who provided employment support such as the opportunity to work on a job plan.

Elements for a Support and Inclusive Employment Program

The primary question that this study focused on was answered by the participants in the previous section based on what was experienced by self-identified trans* participants or observed by people working in services. The primary question is also answered in this section on elements for an inclusive and supportive employment program as stipulated by the participants based on their expertise acquired from their lived experience and by the program deficits that staff perceived.

What programs can do. Sam stressed the importance of having education for employment counsellors, for services and the general public regarding trans* issues. She suggested that employment programs display markers signifying a safe space for trans* people and noting that the information they disclose is confidential. Sam explained that this needs to be done in a way that does not 'other' self-identified trans* people when they access employment services. She cautioned employment programs and trans* services to consider location, time and accessibility. Sam described how one of the people she worked with was excited about the trans* employment workshop offered by Qmunity because it was aligned with their needs. However, in addition to family issues, due to the location of the workshop being downtown and it being offered in the evening, they were unable to attend.

Dan suggested an actual employment program designed for self-identified trans* people to create an environment of ease. Dan stated that the biggest concern that he has heard from trans* people is not feeling comfortable in a mixed classroom and that this lack of comfort leads to trans* people dropping out of the programs.

Sandy proposed a program that operates as a drop-in centre with an open door policy where self-identified trans* people could go and have support with employment. She also suggested having counsellors available. When Sandy pointed out how self-identified trans* people isolate themselves, she emphasized the importance of creating a space for self-identified trans* people who are in the workforce for a way to connect with each other over coffee.

Leslie identified the necessity of confidence building and teaching people how to speak up for themselves. She said that this skill was not taught in the employment programs she has taken and that the majority of trans* people do not speak up for themselves. She illustrated this point with the example of other people using incorrect pronouns in reference to a person who self-identifies as trans* and then the person who is trans* not correcting the speaker. Leslie added that staff should prepare self-identified trans* people for all possibilities when it comes to employment options. She explained that even though it is wrong, there are employers who will discriminate and this might limit job opportunities.

When I asked Ryan to list key elements, he remarked there are so many. However, he listed the following as the most significant. The first Ryan listed was that employment programs should create an environment "where people are honoured for who they are and embraced." This environment should recognize people's autonomy. Ryan explained that the person's employment goals should be recognized and not diminished to something that is more attainable. Instead staff should honour the path of the person accessing services and help eliminate barriers to achieving

their goals. When people go to an employment service they do not want to settle. They are accessing the services in order to improve their life. Ryan emphasized that services working with self-identified trans* people need to do the following:

> Give them meaningful, meaningful employment. Not a job. Meaningful employment. A way into a career. If somebody wants a job in law enforcement, I am not going to recommend they get a job in security. I am going to recommend they take some courses at the Justice Institute. I am going to do my best to help them get them funding to go do that.

Ryan also stressed that prior to a self-identified trans* person obtaining their desired position and even after they are in the position, staff should be strong advocates for the person within the organization where the person wants to work.

Another element Ryan highlighted was providing assistance with applications for bursaries and grants for people wanting to expand their education and training. He commented on the high number of bursaries available to people who are marginalized.

Ryan also expressed a need for employment planning to be around a person's identity. By expanding beyond skill development to include assistance with name changes, with connections to services to acquire hormones if people are afraid to return to work without hormones as the hormones could be a part of their transition, finding safe workplaces for trans* people and addressing any medical barriers to employment, including mental wellness issues. Ryan offered the suggestion of programs providing other types of support, such as working as a bank to help people save funds for school.

The final suggestion that Ryan had was that employment program services should expand past resume building to recognize the value in transferrable skills. He illustrated this point with the following situation as an example:

> Ok well, so you worked the streets for X amount of years. Well people may look at that and go this person was a survivor sex worker on the streets. Street based sex work people might not see any transferrable skills there. But you know what you are a fucking master negotiator.

Other transferrable skills from working in the sex trade that Ryan mentioned included being your own boss, managing a business, doing accounting, financial management, prioritization.

Workplace education. In addition to the suggestions provided in response to what elements would create a supportive and inclusive employment program for people who self-identify as trans*, Chanel responded similarly as other participants. The question was to determine what elements should be in a program for people who self-identify as trans* to support them in their future employment. Regardless of the original question, many participants focused on what should be present in programs to teach people and employers on how to accept people who self-identify as trans*, which was not originally a focus of my research. However, it clearly is an important piece that was originally missing from this study. Chanel proposed education initiatives to teach people that trans* people have something to offer to society and they have valuable lived experiences.

June stated that it is not necessarily that self-identified trans* people need employment programs. Instead, she argued that it is the public who needs to learn how to accept trans* employees. June acknowledged that there are employment laws against discrimination. However, she stated that does not stop discrimination from happening. June described the importance of

employers being educated on non-discrimination towards trans* people. June recommended how one solution could be using public service commercials to raise awareness about trans* issues.

Shayna stated she was unable to answer the question on what elements would make an inclusive and supportive employment program. However, she did explain that people should take a class on the issues that working self-identified trans* people face and to show them how trans* people are just like everyone else.

Sandy emphasized the importance for people who work in public services and for the government to have mandatory trans* sensitivity training. Sandy referenced the work done by Vancouver Coastal Health's program Prism. Among the services that Prism provides is "workshops and training for service providers, community members, students and service users on inclusion, diversity and promoting health and wellness for the LGBTQ2S communities" (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2014).

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Debriefing

I held debriefing sessions with the participants to provide them with the opportunity to discuss any concerns they had with the study and to mention anything they would have answered differently. Furthermore, I clarified any points that were shared by the participants and reviewed any key direct quotes for their approval.

The five people I was able to debrief with were Sabina, Sam, June, Ryan, and Leslie. Sam explained that this topic is really exciting and it was "heartening to express concerns". Sabina also expressed that she is happy employment services are paying attention, such as with the webinar, and that studies on trans* issues in employment are taking place. June explained

that being involved in this study was great. She remarked that she has never had anyone call her back to debrief and that the study's focus is a tricky subject. June added that she hopes that the government will launch a trans* employment program. She also stressed that "people always think about it as about having sex and it isn't, it is about gender." Ryan commented on how the process was done respectfully and with transparency.

Implications

While considering the implications of this study I did so while applying a feminist approach in how I shared the knowledge of the participants. Wolf (1996) argued that "feminist dilemmas in fieldwork revolve around power, often displaying contradictory, difficult and irreconcilable positions for the researcher" (p.1). These contradictions were apparent as it was of the utmost importance to this study for the knowledge and the experiences of the participants to take centre stage and not be overshadowed by my own analysis. However, I remained cognizant of Patai's (1991) argument that ethical research is not possible, even from a feminist standpoint with good intentions, because there will always be power imbalances between the researcher and the research participants (as cited in Wolf, 1996, p.21). With this in mind and while remaining aware of my own epistemological position, I provided the themes as stressed by the participants themselves in the interview summary. Therefore, the following section addresses the implications of this study by merely highlighting key points within a disability management framework and a queer framework while applying these considerations to supportive and inclusive employment program services for people who self-identify as trans*.

Expanding programs' population focus. In Rothman's (1995) discussion on different approaches to community intervention, he noted that with the locality development approach, which utilizes broad community participation to determine goals and civic action, that one

criticism is that its primary focus is on the role of marginalized groups. Rothman criticized this emphasis by stating that for community intervention to be successful that it is the "attitudes of the affluent and well-placed that need rearranging" (p.31). As stressed by Chanel, June, Shayna, and Sandy, there is a need for education amongst employers, people working with the self-identified trans* population and general society. The 'rearranging' of attitudes also applies to staff in the employment program sector as stipulated by Sabina and Sam. Even though mental wellness issues can materialize for a variety of reasons, it is necessary for programs to recognize that mental wellness issues can also materialize as a result of transphobia, including transphobia within the workplace and within different service organizations. Avery, Hellman, and Sudderth (2002) and Kidd et al. (2011) identified transphobia as a primary cause for increased rates of suicidality and mental wellness issues for trans* people (as cited in Mizock & Mueser, 2014, p.146). Therefore, a successful employment program would take into account how to educate all employers and employment program staff in conjunction with providing supports to self-identified trans* people who access its services.

Community involvement. Despite the need for 'rearranging' the perspectives of those who are affluent and well-placed, while developing an inclusive and supportive employment program, there should still be a focus on community-based development. In Horwath, Simoni, and Walters' (2001) study, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirit First Nations participants expressed the importance of service and need identification through community-based discussion (p.144). The intersections of race, class, ethnicity, and wellness with trans* self-identification were highlighted by the majority of the participants in my study. With these intersections, it is necessary for self-identified trans* people who access employment program services to be involved in the discussion. Their involvement is crucial in the creation of programs

that acknowledge the diverse experiences, assets and needs of all trans* people. Harder and Scott (2005) emphasized this point by stating that "disability management practitioners need to recognize that there is a huge range of individual differences that must be taken into consideration when applying any model or theory to treatment and interventions" (p.25). The discussions led by self-identified trans* people should continue to happen on-going with the continued delivery of employment programs as needs and assets of individuals will shift and change with society's progress as well as with new issues requiring attention.

As highlighted by Eade (2010), for change to be successful not only is capacity building essential there should also be "mutual respect and solidarity" (p.637). Accordingly, employment program staff members who are cisgender should work in solidarity with trans* people with shared respect in order to provide a well-developed program. Harder and Scott (2005) referred to the importance of community agencies in terms of disability management by stating that "they are often overlooked but available..." (p.34). For programs that require training on trans* awareness and solidarity building, they could enlist the support of community agencies that provide supports to self-identified trans* people. As mentioned previously, Vancouver Coastal Health's Prism is an example of a program that provides education on trans* issues for organizations. This study provides further examples of community agencies in Appendix 11.

Value. With disability management, within the context of employment, financial security was a reoccurring goal. Baril, Franch, Loisel, Nicholas, and Shaw (2005) noted that financial security is a primary motivator for workers who participate in disability management programs (p.530). With increased job opportunities through the assistance of employment programs there will be increased financial security for self-identified trans* people as a whole. Though financial security was mentioned by the participants, just as important is the self-worth attained through

confidence building. This is especially true in terms of the value of a person's assets and goals, which was addressed so meaningfully by Ryan when he referred to how employment program staff should honour the desired paths of people who access their programs. With the implementation of employment programs, financial security should not be the only value focused on. Chope and Stom (2008) cautioned that people who encounter transphobia in the workplace could have lower self-confidence (as cited in Mizock & Mueser, 2014, p. 147). An inclusive employment program should address confidence building, in addition to recognizing the importance of healing from discrimination and in some cases from acts of violence. Singh, Hays, and Watson (2011) noted in their study that along with a sense of self-worth, hope and activism, that being a role model was recognized by transgender participants as a source of resilience (as cited in Mizock & Mueser, p. 147). Leslie remarked that one of the challenges she faced was not having better role models and that since working as a peer support worker at the sex worker support organization she feels like a role model. There would be great value in creating an employment program with the inclusion of self-identified trans* peer staff due to the empowerment for the peer worker as a role model and also because the lived experience of peer staff is unsurmountable.

Limitations and Areas for Further Exploration

There are three limitations to this study: location, employment background, and a lack of a variety of identities.

This study focused specifically on Vancouver, located on unceded Coast Salish Territories. Though one participant discussed a Winnipeg employment program there was no further exploration on how employment programs operate across provinces. With the Employment Program of B.C. holding the contract with the province for employment programs

each program is required to follow set policy. Therefore, there is little to compare between program to program.

Many of the participants had previous experience working in the sex trade. Although I contacted a variety of different organizations in Vancouver, and only one organization that accepted my request to circulate recruitment advertisements was an organization that worked in sex worker supports, the response rate from people who have experience in the sex trade was predominantly higher than from people who did not have experience in the sex trade. The knowledge shared by the participants showed how sex trade work can be an option for employment. However, this study does not intend to convey that experience in the sex trade is representative of everyone who self-identifies as trans* nor does it intend to say that working in the sex trade is a not valid choice for some people. I am merely stating that this study is limited by not showing a vast variety of employment experiences of self-identified trans* people.

The self-identified trans* participants primarily identified with feminine pronouns, except for one participant. This study could have benefited from more participants that identified with male pronouns or non-gender pronouns. Additionally, with the various types of gender identities and sex identities, this study would have also benefited with the inclusion of more identities and genders.

Possible Outcomes/Contributions

This study sought to determine what elements are required for a self-identified trans* employment program and whether there is a need for improved services. All participants provided the elements. This study was used to provide a background on the issues and provide a platform for the elements to be shared by the participants based on their own knowledge. This knowledge is valuable as it comes from the people most affected. There still remains a pertinent

area to be explored, which is the experiences of people who self-identify as trans* once they have completed a tailored program to self-identified trans* needs within a Vancouver context. Until a program is designed and implemented specifically for self-identified trans* people in Vancouver, this key area cannot be explored.

A possible outcome is others can use these findings as a foundation to create an employment program that encourages new skill development and personal development while recognizing the health concerns and barriers associated with transitioning or not identifying as one of the gender binaries. In the *Human Resources Guide to the Duty to Accommodate*, Humphrey (2002) emphasized that appropriate accommodations "will respect the dignity of the individual" (p.14). Therefore, another possible outcome is for pre-existing employment programs, that are not tailored to trans* people, to accommodate trans* people while recognizing that everyone has individual experiences, distinct needs and strengths. A final potential outcome is increased awareness among employment program staff and the general public about what supports could benefit self-identified trans* people in the employment field. Society as a whole has a responsibility to break down barriers for trans* people. This is clearly stated by Leslie who exclaimed that people need to "Stop putting up barriers because of [their] own moralistic ideolog[ies]!"

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Appendix 1
Questions for Participants

Questions for Employment Program Staff

1. How long have you been a worker in the employment program field?
2. What services does your employment program agency offer for?
3. Have you had any clients who have self-identified as trans/two-spirit/non-gender/gender-queer/transgender/transsexual? (I will use the term trans as an umbrella term)
4. How many?
5. If so, have they revealed any barriers to securing employment?
6. What types of barriers have they revealed to you?
7. Are these barriers related to their self-identification as trans?
8. Based on your expertise in the employment program field, have you observed any barriers that they have not revealed to you?
9. What elements in your program have been beneficial for your self-identified trans clients?
10. Are there any areas that require improvements? If so, which areas?
11. Have you completed any external referrals to help self-identified trans clients with their barriers? If so, which agencies have you referred to?
12. Do you have training in areas specific to trans people's needs?

Questions for Organizations that Offer Trans Supports

1. How long have you been working for this agency?
2. What services does your agency offer for self-identified trans people?
3. Have you had any clients who have expressed a need for employment supports?
4. How many?
5. If so, have they revealed any barriers to securing employment?
6. What types of barriers have they revealed to you?
7. Are these barriers related to their self-identification as trans?
8. Based on your expertise as an employee with an organization that offers trans supports, have you observed any barriers that they have not revealed to you?
9. Have your clients advised you of any elements in employment programs that they have attended that were beneficial?
10. Have your clients advised you of any elements in employment programs that they have attended that have hindered their return to work?
11. Have you completed any external referrals to employment programs to help self-identified trans clients with their barriers?
12. Do you have training in employment supports?

Questions for Self-Identified Trans Participants

1. Do you identify as trans, two-spirit, non-gender, gender queer, or transgender, transsexual?
2. If yes, which term do you identify with?
3. If no, which term do you identify with?
4. Do you or have you experienced barriers to employment?
5. Are you currently unemployed, underemployment or employed?
6. Do you have any medical conditions that have been barriers to employment?
7. Do you have any other barriers, such as financial barriers, to securing and maintaining employment?
8. Have you experienced any discrimination in the workplace?
9. Has this affected your return to work?
10. Have you encountered any discrimination in an employment program?
11. What are some positive experiences you have had in employment programs?
12. What are some negative experiences you have had in employment programs?
13. How did you find out about this program? Were you referred to the program or did you self-refer to the program?
14. If you have secured employment, are you satisfied with the position you have obtained?
15. Based on your experience, what elements would create a supportive and inclusive return to work employment program for people who self-identify as trans?

Appendix 3
Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Inika-Chelsey Arentsen and I am a Master's student at the University of Northern British Columbia in Disability Management. I am recruiting participants for my thesis project titled "Elements for a Supportive and Inclusive Employment Program for Self-Identified Trans Individuals in Vancouver (located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples)". Attached is my recruitment poster for my study. Is it possible to circulate my email and the attached poster at your organization? Anyone who is interested in participating in my study can contact me by email at: arentsen@unbc.ca or by contacting me at my cell number at: 1-604-989-4782.

For those that are selected for my research, I will present them with a **$15 honorarium** for their participation.

My anticipated research dates are from June 1st, 2014 to December 31st, 2014.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Inika Arentsen

Appendix 4
Consent Form For Agencies

Thank you in advance for your interest in this Master's in Disability Management study titled "Elements for a Supportive and Inclusive Employment Program for Self-Identified Trans Individuals in Vancouver (located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples)".

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine supportive and inclusive employment program supports for people who self-identify as trans/two-spirited/non-gendered/gender-queer/transgendered/transsexual. (I will use the term trans as an umbrella term.)
Thank you for allowing your employee to participate in my research project. Your employee will receive a $15 honorarium for their participation.

Selection Process

Employees from your agency will be chosen for this study if they volunteer to participate and if they identify as one of these groups:

1. Employment program case managers and employment program developers in Vancouver (located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples).
2. Staff who work for community organizations in Vancouver that provide services to the self-identified trans population

Potential Benefits

The intention of my research is to determine if there is a need for improved employment support services for trans self-identified individuals. My findings will highlight any critical areas for change and the parties required to create this change.

Potential Risk

I will not intentionally use any deception in my study and I do not anticipate that participants will experience any physical risks by participating in my study. I recognize that there are potential psychological risks as the questions could be uncomfortable for some participants. If requested, I can provide participants with information on free counselling supports offered at Qmunity.

Data Collection

I will ask participants a series of questions regarding employment programs and trans specific issues. The questions have been reviewed by UNBC's Research Ethics Board. I will be the only person who will have access to participants' verbal or written responses, other than individual participants.

Signatures

Organization's Signing Authority Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Name of Organization: _____
Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

UNBC Student Researcher's Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

your participation. Additionally, I might need to contact you at a later date if I need to clarify some of your responses with you.

I will be the only person who will have access to your verbal or written responses, other than yourself. After I have completed my research, I will be presenting my findings in a thesis defence at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in Prince George. I will advise you in advance of the presentation date and you are invited to attend. Following the presentation, my research will be made available through the UNBC library.

Potential Benefits

The intention of my research is to determine if there is a need for improved employment support services for trans self-identified individuals. My findings will highlight any critical areas for change and the parties required to create this change.

Potential Risk

I will not intentionally use any deception in my study and I do not anticipate that you will experience any physical risks by participating in my study. I recognize that there are potential psychological risks as the questions could be uncomfortable for some participants. If requested, I can provide you with information on free counselling supports offered at Qmunity.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Regarding confidentiality, I will make every effort to prevent other people from being able to identify who you are based on your responses. Regarding anonymity, I will not be collecting information, such as your full name, and you have the option of using an alias.
I will ensure that all identifying information I obtain will be kept confidential even to other parties involved in the study. Furthermore, I will be the only one reviewing the data.
I will be requesting your contact information to reach you in order to be contacted for participation and to ask any further questions. Based on your preference, the contact information can be your phone number, Gmail Chat name, Skype name or email address.

Storing of Information

I will retain all hardcopy documents and audio recordings in a secure location (in a locked safe at home) and my laptop is password protected. 6 months after I have written my thesis, I will destroy all confidential hardcopy papers through paper shredding. Additionally, I will erase all computer files, and audio recordings.

How to Obtain a Final Copy

My study will be available through the UNBC library. If you would like a final electronic copy or final hardcopy, please tick YES in the corresponding box below and provide me with your directions on where to send the copy. If you do not want a copy, please tick NO:

☐	YES - I would like a final electronic copy. Please send the copy to:
☐	YES - I would like a final hardcopy. Please send the copy to: _____
☐	NO- I do not want a final copy.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding this project, you can contact Dr. Henry Harder by email: henry.harder@unbc.ca or by phone: 250-960-6506.

Complaints

If you have any complaints regarding this study, you can contact the Office of Research Ethics Board at the University of Northern British Columbia by email: reb@unbc.ca or by phone: 250-960-6735.

B) Consent Form

- By signing this consent form, you are acknowledging that you are voluntarily participating in my research project and that you will receive a $15 honorarium.
- By signing this consent form, you are acknowledging that you understand that the following items were disclosed to you in this information letter: the purpose of my research, my participant selection process, your participation involvement, potential benefits of this research, any potential risks, how I will store your information, how to obtain a final copy, your right to remain anonymous and your right to confidentiality.
- By signing this consent form, you are also acknowledging that if you have a complaint regarding this project you can contact the Office of Research Ethics Board at the University of Northern British Columbia.
- By signing this consent form, you are acknowledging that a copy of the consent form and information letter will be given to you. Depending on your preferred method of communication and the type of contact information you have provided, I will provide the information letter and consent form in-person, by email, or as an attachment through an electronic messaging system such as Skype or Gmail chat.

Participant's Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____
UNBC Student Researcher's Signature:
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

Appendix 7
Dr. Harder's Vancouver Coastal Health Affiliated Investigator Status

Vancouver CoastalHealth Research Institute
Healthier lives through discovery

VCH Research Institute
Jim Pattison Pavilion North
3665—910 West 10th Ave
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9
www.vchri.ca

March 24, 2014

Dr. Henry G. Harder
Professor, School of Health Sciences
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

Dear Dr. Harder:

Thank you very much for your letter requesting Affiliated Investigator status at Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute. We are pleased to offer you this status within the Institute and we hope you find opportunities for productive collaborations with our other researchers.

Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute provides a focus for all the research activity within our health authority, including activities in the communities served by VCH. We invite you to learn more about our activities on our web site (www.vchri.ca). Please do not hesitate to call me should you have any questions.

Welcome to VCHRI!

Yours sincerely,

W. Robert McMaster, D. Phil.
Vice President Research, Vancouver Coastal Health
Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute

cc: Dr. R. Luke Harris, Assistant Professor & Acting Chair, School of Health Sciences, University of Northern British Columbia
Ms. Stephania Manusha, Regional Manager, Vancouver Coastal Health Clinical Trials Administration Office

Appendix 8
Vancouver Coastal Health's Ethics Approval

Vancouver CoastalHealth Research Institute
Healthier lives through discovery

W. Robert McMaster, D. Phil
Vice President Research, Vancouver Coastal Health
Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute
Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Medicine
The University of British Columbia

June 25, 2014

Dr. Henry Harder & Inika-Chelsey Arentsen
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Research Study # UNBC E2014-0220.012.00

FINAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

TITLE: Elements for a Supportive and Inclusive Employment program for Self-Identified Trans Individuals in Vancouver (located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples)

SPONSOR: UNBC Research Project Award

This is to inform you that your project has been approved. Approval has been granted until **May 15, 2015** based on the following:

1. UNBC Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval #E2014.0220.012.00
2. Vancouver Coastal Health approval

Yours truly,

Dr. Robert McMaster
Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute
Vice President Research, Vancouver Coastal Health

Appendix 9
UNBC's Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Inika-Chelsey Arentsen
CC: Henry Harder

From: Michael Murphy, Chair
Research Ethics Board

Date: May 15, 2014

Re: **E2014.0220.012.00**
Elements for a Supportive and Inclusive Employment Program for Self-Identified Trans Individuals in Vancouver (located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples)

Thank you for submitting revisions to the Research Ethics Board (REB) regarding the above-noted proposal. Your revisions have been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the REB.

If you have any questions on the above or require further clarification please feel free to contact Rheanna Robinson in the Office of Research (reb@unbc.ca or 250-960-6735).

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Murphy
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Appendix 11
Community Resource Listing

The following is a list of community resources that provide employment services and/or a variety of services for people who self-identify as trans. Please review their websites to determine which services these organizations offer. This information was obtained from sources that are publically published online. Many organizations with 'Vancouver' in the address recognize their location as being on unceded Coast Salish Territory (refer to the footnote on page 1 for more information).*

Aboriginal Front Door Society
384 Main Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6A 2T1
Website: www.abfrontdoor.com
Telephone: 604-697-5662
Email: abfrontdoor.van@gmail.com

All Bodies Swim
Website: allbodiesswim.org
Email: allbodiesswim@gmail.com

Battered Women's Support Services
(Mailing Address) PO Box 21503, 1424 Commercial Drive,
Vancouver, B.C., V5L 5G2
Website: www.bwss.org
Toll Free Telephone: 1-855-687-1868
Email: information@bwss.org

Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre
1145 Commercial Drive,
(in the REACH Clinic)
Vancouver, B.C., V5L 3X3
Website: www.cwhwc.com
Telephone: 604 442 4352
Email: contactus@cwhwc.com

Coast Mental Health
293 East 11th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C., V5T 2C4
Website: www.coastmentalhealth.com
Telephone Phone: 604-872-3502
Toll-Free Telephone: 1-877-602-6278
Email: info@coastmentalhealth.com

Dancing to Eagle Spirit Society
309-2326 Eton Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V5R 1E1
Website: www.dancingtoeaglespiritsociety.org/
Telephone: 604-291-2202
Email: info@dancingtoeaglespiritsociety.org

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
302 Columbia Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6A 4J1
Website: www.dewc.ca
Telephone: 604-681-8480
Email: admin@dewc.ca

Family Services of Greater Vancouver
(Main Office)
301-1638 East Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C., V5N 1W1
Website: www.fsgv.ca
Telephone: 604-731-4951

Health Initiative for Men
310-1033 Davie Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6E 1M7
Website: checkhimout.ca
Telephone: 604-488-1001
Email: office@checkhimout.ca

Immigration Services Society of British Columbia
#501 - 333 Terminal Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C., V6A 2L7
Website: issbc.org/
Telephone: 604-684-2561
Email: iss@issbc.org

Little Sisters Book & Art Emporium
1238 Davie Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6E 1N3
Website: littlesisters.ca
Telephone: 604-669-1753
Toll-Free Telephone: 1-800-567-1662

MOSAIC
1720 Grant Street, 2nd floor
Vancouver, B.C., V5L 2Y7
Website: www.mosaicbc.com

Telephone: 604-254-9626
Email: mosaic@mosaicbc.com

Mpowerment YVR
YouthCO - Suite 205 (Second Floor)
568 Seymour Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6B 3J5
Website: www.mpowermentyvr.com
Telephone: 604-688-1441

Open Door Group Services
(Head Office)
300-30 East 6th Avenue,
Website: http://www.opendoorgroup.org
Vancouver, B.C., V5T 1J4
Telephone: 604-872-0770
Toll Free Telephone: 1-866-377-3670
Email: info@opendoorgroup.org

Our City Of Colours
Website: http://www.ourcityofcolours.com/
Email: info@ourcityofcolours.com

Out On Campus (Simon Fraser University)
Rotunda, TC 314-N
8888 University Drive,
Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6
Telephone: 778-782-5933
Email: ooc2@sfss.ca

PACE Society
49 West Cordova Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1C8
Website: www.pace-society.org
Telephone: 604-872-7651

PFLAG Vancouver
Website: www.pflagvancouver.com/
Telephone: 604-626-5667
Email: info@pflagvancouver.com

Pinoy Pride Vancouver
Website: www.facebook.com/pinoypride.vancouver

Pride Centre (University of Northern British Columbia)
Rm 6-344 NUSC Building

3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C., V2N 4Z9
Telephone: 250- 960-6461
E-mail:prideunbc@gmail.com
Website: http://www.northernpridesociety.com/

Pride UBC Collective
Room 245C, Student Union Building
6138 Student Union Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C., V6T 1Z1
Website: www.prideubc.com/
Telephone: 604-822-4638
Email: prideubc@gmail.com

Prism Services (Vancouver Coastal Health)
(Services are available at a variety of locations. Please refer to website for locations.)
Website: www.vch.ca/prism
Email: prism@vch.ca

Qmunity
1170 Bute Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6E 1Z6
Website: www.qmunity.ca
Telephone: 604.684.5307 ext. 100
Email: reception@qmunity.ca

Rainbow Refugee Committee
1170 Bute Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 1Z7
Website: www.rainbowrefugee.ca
Email: info@rainbowrefugee.ca

Sher Vancouver
Email: shervancouver@hotmail.com
Website: www.shervancouver.com

Trans Alliance Society
c/o 1170 Bute Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6E 1Z6
Website: http://www.transalliancesociety.org

Trans Life Line
Website: www.translifeline.org/
Telephone: 1-877-330-6366

Trans Pride Vancouver
Website: www.transpridevancouver.wordpress.com

Transgender Health Information Program (Vancouver Coastal Health)
1290 Hornby Street
Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 1W2
Website: www.transhealth.vch.ca
Telephone: 604-734-1514
Toll Free Telephone (B.C. only): 1-866-999-1514
Email: transhealth@vch.ca

UVic Pride Collective
Student Union Building
University of Victoria
P.O. Box 3035,
Lekwungen Territory
Victoria, B.C., V8W 3P3
Website: http://uvicpride.ca
Telephone: 250-472-4393
Email: pride@uvic.ca

Vancouver Women's Health Collective
29 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C., V6B 1G4
Website: www.womenshealthcollective.ca
Telephone: 604-736-5262
Email: vwhc.centre@gmail.com

WISH Drop-In Centre Society
334 Alexander Street,
Vancouver, B.C., V6A 1C3
Website: www.wish-vancouver.net
Telephone: 604-681-9244
Email: wishdropincentre@shaw.ca

Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis Centre
2405 Pine Street
P.O. Box 46851 Station D
Website: www.wavaw.ca
Vancouver, B.C., V6J 5M4
Telephone: 604-255-6228
24 Hour Crisis Line: 604-255-6344
Toll-Free Telephone: 1-877-392-7583

YWCA Career Zone
1260 Granville Street,

Vancouver, B.C., V6Z 1M4
Website: www.vancouveryouth.ca
Telephone: 604-605-4666
Email: mhardy@ywcavan.org