

Community Priorities



Book Three from
**2SLGBTQ+ Community & Life During a Global Pandemic:
A Resistance Based Photovoice Collective**

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This digital book is the third in a series of five books.

This book examines the third theme in a larger photovoice research project that investigated the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people with community during the COVID-19 pandemic. As community engaged research, the photographers who submitted images acted as participant researchers, which means that they both submitted images as participants in the study as well as contributed to the thematic analysis of the images as researchers during Community Cafés (small group online meetings).



(stock image)

Cis-heteronormativity

The first and second books in this series examined the ways that participant researchers were affected by and challenged cis-heteronormativity.

2SLGBTQ+ people face systematic exclusion because society is set up in a way that naturalizes, normalizes, and values heterosexuality and binary (man/woman) genders. Though participant researchers were constrained by the cis-heteronormative structure of society and dominant norms, they were also resistant and resilient – they utilized their agency to challenge dominant norms through being visible, challenging the gender binary, creating safer spaces for themselves, and being their authentic selves in a society that actively promotes and enforces the gender binary and heterosexuality.

Community Priorities

This book will look at 2SLGBTQ+ community priorities as identified by participant researchers.

Participant researchers expressed community priorities to dismantle cis-heteronormativity revolving around the following:

- educating society about our populations to see our population experience inclusion and acceptance, and
- addressing discrimination and bias.

Focusing on these community priorities enables us to imagine a society that values people as unique and that is inclusive and accepting of all.

Unlimited Possibilities



(Photo by Boobeck, 2020).

For Boobeck, each pair of shoes represents a different person, a different journey, and a different adventure, and “the fact that they are all on the same tree makes them all part of a strong community. One that is solid in its message and inclusive of everyone or anyone.”

Boobeck wanted to use this image to promote the priority of educating for community inclusion and acceptance. The tree has all different kinds of shoes, slippers and even skates, representing all walks of life, including the rich and the poor. Boobeck stated, “the tree does not care what walk of life you were from, everyone is welcome, and anyone can join the other footwear in promoting an inclusive community.” Boobeck stressed the importance of advocating for the inclusion of all walks of life in all cultures and races and believes that we need to be teaching inclusion at school in every grade level, promoting inclusion in television, movies, and books, and having conversations that model what inclusion looks like. She also stated, “in an ideal community, there is always a space in the circle for somebody else.”

Nurturing Pride and the 2SLGBTQ+ Community



Nurturing the Rainbow

Jean wanted to provide a photo that demonstrated the need to nurture our 2SLGBTQ+ self and the community at large. Nurture is defined as to care for and encourage the growth or development of something.

(Photo by Jean Turner, 2020).

This photo pertains to the priority of addressing discrimination and bias. Jean said “I find that the 2SLGBTQ+ community is often 'hard' on themselves or towards one another. For instance, biphobia exists even within the community with some not accepting bi as being legitimate. I find myself asking, 'if our own community is not accepting or harbours phobia, how can we expect the straight cisgender community to be accepting?' The 2SLGBTQ+ community needs to reflect and identify their own biases; we need to have honest discussions about those biases and work towards eliminating them before we can expect full support from those outside of the community. There is a need to nurture ourselves as individuals and nurture the 2SLGBTQ+ community as a whole. Reflect, learn and overcome our own biases, to love ourselves and encourage others to do the same. Call out ignorant or biased comments within our own community.”

Diversity Among Us Should Be a Strength Not a Division



(Photo by Mabe Kyle, 2020).

The colourful rocks in this photo represent the 2SLGBTQ+ community and the grey rocks represent the cis-heterosexual people in society.

For Mabe, the image relates to educating about our populations because, especially in rural communities, we are spread apart and it can be difficult to find one another. The 2SLGBTQ+ community is also very diverse. We have many different gender, sexual, and romantic identities within the 2SLGBTQ+ community and we come from all different parts of society (race, religion, class, disabilities etc.). It can be difficult to forge community based on the only common denominator being that everyone is 2SLGBTQ+, especially when people have internalized queerphobia. Mabe wanted people to know that the 2SLGBTQ+ community is diverse, and many people disagree on a lot of issues – everyone has different positionalities and what a cisgender gay man will experience is different than a non-binary or trans person.

As Mabe says, “Reach out to those in rural areas to create more of a connection despite distance. Find ways to create queer liberation instead of equality with cis-heterosexual people.”

It's Not All Rainbows and Unicorns, Learn to Love



(Photo by Pandora, 2020).

Pandora took this photo with feelings of happiness, love, colours, and rainbows, but it has a deeper meaning when she thinks about what her friends have endured in life just for being who they are. Pandora feels sadness and hurt because everyone deserves love. She said, "I was taught to love inside, not based on what the body displays." She has a hard time comprehending what some of her friends have seen and it breaks her heart. She tries to be guided by love instead of stereotypes. This photo addressed the priority of education for inclusion and acceptance. She says, "I think the media has a lot to do with homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Hate seems to be the root cause and education is needed." This photo also speaks to the priority of addressing bias and discrimination. Pandora believes we all should not be so judgmental stating, "don't judge a book by its cover. Just love one another. Remain open minded and accept everyone's journey."

Conclusion

Participant researchers' expressions of their community priorities related to 2SLGBTQ+ community focused on dismantling cis-heteronormativity through educating society about our populations to see our population experience inclusion and acceptance and addressing discrimination and bias. These priorities are about representation, inclusion, acceptance, and safety, which amounts to a desire for a sense of belonging in a society that is educated about to 2SLGBTQ+ identities and is welcoming and caring of all people.

They worked hard to create community and a sense of belonging for themselves, and this will be discussed further in the next book in this series.

Local Community Resources

The Bridge Brant

- Web: www.thebridgebrant.com
- Email: thebridgebrant@gmail.com

Social:

- [https://www.facebook.com/
TheBridgeBrantford](https://www.facebook.com/TheBridgeBrantford)

WorQshop: Building Safer Spaces

- Web: www.worqshop.ca
- Email: info@worqshop.ca

Social:

- [https://www.facebook.com/WorQshop-
Building-Safer-Spaces](https://www.facebook.com/WorQshop-Building-Safer-Spaces)
- <https://www.instagram.com/worqshopbuilding-safer-spaces/>

Brantford, Ontario LGBTQ+ Community

Facebook Group:

- [https://www.facebook.com/groups/
379313486333504](https://www.facebook.com/groups/379313486333504)

Brantford Pride

- Web: www.brantfordpride.ca
- Email: brantfordpride@gmail.com

Social:

- www.facebook.com/BtfdPride/
- [https://www.instagram.com/
brantfordpride/](https://www.instagram.com/brantfordpride/)

County of Brant Pride

Social:

- [https://www.facebook.com/groups
/ 816583548754351](https://www.facebook.com/groups/816583548754351)

Laurier Brantford Queer Sphere

- Email: queersphere@wlu.ca

Social:

- [https://www.facebook.com/Queer
Sphere](https://www.facebook.com/QueerSphere)



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