

Geographic Distribution of Conversion Therapy in Canada

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Presentation Description:

The objective of the present research is to conduct a geospatial analysis by tracking the location of conversion therapy services offered throughout Canadian provinces, territories, and municipalities. Findings will help inform policies and practices to eliminate harmful sexual orientation or gender identity or expression change efforts (SOGIECE) practices in Canada.

Abstract:

Sexual orientation or gender identity or expression change efforts (SOGIECE), also known as “conversion therapy” are widely discredited practices, yet they continue to occur in Canada. SOGIECE refers to any practice designed to change, deny, or discourage one’s feelings of sexual attraction to members of the same gender, LGBQ identity, non-conforming gender expression, or gender identity that differs from sex at birth. There is no credible scientific research that proves conversion therapy is effective or psychologically safe. In fact, previous research suggests conversion therapy negatively impacts and stigmatizes LGBTQ2S+ persons, leading to increased anxiety, depression, self-hatred, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide or suicidal thoughts, and many lifelong psychological and social issues. On October 1, 2020, the Government of Canada reintroduced Bill C-6 to ban conversion therapy practices. Although criminal law reform is an important step that will further protect and promote rights to equality, it may drive conversion therapy practices underground. Thus, data collection is needed to detect where practices of conversion therapy still persist. The objective of the research is to conduct a geospatial analysis by tracking the location of conversion therapy practices through an interactive map, pinpointing provinces, territories, and municipalities. Data were collected from a survey of Canadians who have direct experience with conversion therapy, know people who have gone to conversion therapy, or know of conversion therapy practitioners. Findings from the map will help inform policies and practices of where underground conversion therapy practices are still happening so that the Canadian Government can eliminate harmful SOGIECE practices.

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Unceded Coast Salish Territories