

research snapshot

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The Queer Liberation Theory Project

What is this research about?

Social science research on LGBT groups often focuses on LGBT issues, community services and public policy. But community-based participatory research (CBPR) has yet to explore the unique position of community partners who are also researchers and activists. The Queer Liberation Theory (QLT) Project is one example of work being done by partners with overlapping titles. It seeks to explore the diverse range of partners doing social research for queer liberation, and its impact on social movements and society overall. It is an example of engaged scholarship that seeks methods for knowledge translation (KT), transfer, and exchange (KE).

What did the researchers do?

The QLT project used purposive sampling to hold 40 interviews with researchers, activists and artists doing queer liberationist work. Participants were given a package before interviews that included: background information on the QLT project, definitions of queer liberation, and the interview questions. They completed 6 mandatory questions, chose 7-8 optional questions, and created their own question to ask the QLT project.

What you need to know:

Community partners who also serve as researchers and academics are in a unique position to do engaged scholarship. With the QLT project, researchers have both challenged homo-normative LGBT stances, and engaged wider audiences in the conversation.

Strategies are planned to develop and share knowledge about queer liberation from the project. This includes a documentary film, pamphlets, and articles. For the researchers, KT was a crucial strategy to look at the tensions between initial gay liberation values like identity, social justice and social change; and mainstream, neoliberal LGBT movements today. By developing and creating new knowledge for QLT, the project opened multiple levels of critical thought from distinct time-based and socially positioned experiences.

Thus, the process of engaged scholarship was considered through the experience of all partners. The researchers noted the multiple social positions that each partner brought into these complex engagements.

What did the researchers find?

By doing CBPR, the QLT project offered differential rewards to partners with overlapping roles as researchers, community partners and activists. They were able to choose and feel valued by the activities that linked the academic and practical aspects of queer liberation. The knowledge from this project will also be shared in various ways to reach different audiences as well. These new findings and challenges for queer liberation theory could not be created without the diverse KEs from those who were interviewed.

The QLT project has also given queer liberation movements a voice among dominant, homo-normative LGBT movements. Thus, the major outputs from the project will create ongoing KE through dialogue on future directions.

How can you use this research?

Community partners and activists working with LGBT and queer movements may find this research useful. It sheds insight on an important dialogue between diverse leaders and thinkers for LGTBQ issues. It also offers ideas on the various mediums that can engage people with queer liberation issues. This includes the strategy of using pamphlets, film and articles to engage both academic and non-academic audiences.

About the Researchers

Nick J. Mulé is Associate Professor for the School of Social Work at York University, and Principal Investigator for the Queer Liberation Theory Project. He is also Chairperson for the social justice group Queer Ontario.

nickmule@yorku.ca

A.J. Lowik is a Masters Student at York University, Research Assistant for the QLT project, and Secretary for Queer Ontario.

ajlowik@yorku.ca

Rob Teixeira is a PhD Student at York University, a Sessional Instructor at the Ontario College of Art & Design University, and Member of Queer Ontario.

Richard Hudler is a Participant of the QLT Project, and Treasurer for Queer Ontario.

Davina Hader is Cinematographer and Research Assistant for the QLT Project, and Vice-Chair Person for Queer Ontario.

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kmbunit@yorku.ca

www.researchimpact.ca

