

HOMELESSNESS IN THE QUEER, GENDER-DIVERSE & INTERSEX COMMUNITY: QUICK FACT SHEET



Artwork: Huriana Kopeke - Te Aho

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RainbowYOUTH

THE ISSUE

Around the world, we have data that shows that queer, gender diverse and intersex young people are disproportionately affected in youth homelessness statistics. For many, identity can play a huge role in unsafe or unstable living situations and be one of the main drivers into being at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

1 in 5

TRANS PEOPLE IN NZ
HAVE EXPERIENCED
HOMELESSNESS AT
SOME POINT IN
THEIR LIVES

OUR DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS INCLUDES:



COUCH - SURFING



STREETS & PARKS



CARS



PRECARIOUS HOUSING
(MOTELS & HOSTELS)

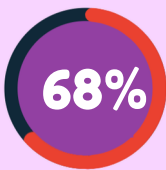


GARAGES/SHEDS



SHELTERS/SERVICES

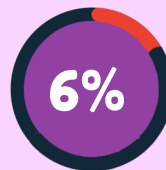
Queer, gender-diverse & intersex young people are at significantly high risk of becoming homeless. As seen in the Counting Ourselves Survey:



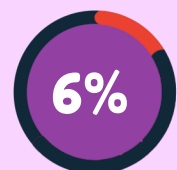
HAVE AN
ANNUAL
INCOME OF LESS
THAN THE NZ
MEDIAN INCOME



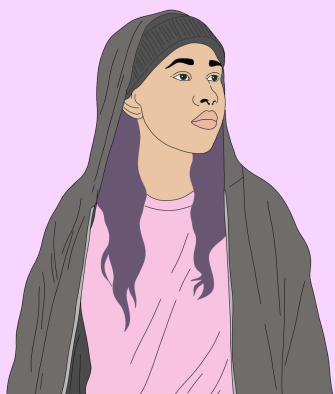
DENIED
RENTING A
HOME DUE TO
BEING
TRANS/NON-
BINARY



KICKED OUT OF
HOME DUE TO
BEING
TRANS/NON-
BINARY



HOMELESS DUE
TO VIOLENCE
FROM A
PARTNER OR
FAMILY MEMBER



"I got kicked out of a flat because they decided that trans women aren't really women. . . . because I was trans I was a target for workplace bullying which is why I lost my job and ended up on a benefit with mental health issues which in turn is why I got kicked out of another flat. When I was living in a car I went back to presenting as male for safety reasons e.g. charity drop in centres aren't the safest of spaces"

- Counting Ourselves, pg. 87

THE IMPACTS

FOOD INSECURITY



Low to no food intake, relying on dumpster diving & cheap food

SUBSTANCE USE



Related to experience of discrimination and social stressors

MENTAL HEALTH



High rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation

PHYSICAL HEALTH



Transience makes it hard to access healthcare, more likely to avoid seeking care due to fear of discrimination

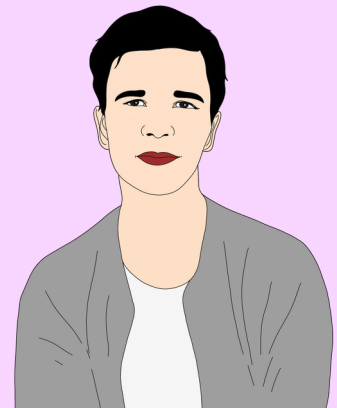
VIOLENCE



Experience high levels of violence and harassment

"It's almost impossible to stay in good health when you are homeless even if you were healthy to begin with. You can't eat right, you don't have the right clothes for the conditions, you don't have the money to buy prescriptions or even get to appointments on the train or bus, and then there is the stress of dealing with all of this which affects both your body and mental health. For me, I also have Lupus, and that makes being homeless a nightmare. Just imagine your body shutting down and then having to deal with all of the above. It's a nightmare, a real-life nightmare."

- Beyond Four Walls



HAD SERIOUSLY THOUGHT ABOUT ATTEMPTING SUICIDE



FELT DISCRIMINATED SEEKING MEDICAL CARE IN THE PAST YEAR



EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE



I have had a lifetime of recurrent mental health crises and being bullied out of my job – usually the mental health crises are caused by workplace bullying. This has left my general health picture rather poor. With all the chaos in my life . . . [I] don't have the stability to get on top of everyday health issues e.g. establish healthy eating, exercise, sleeping and relaxation routines. It's a perfect storm of vicious cycles.

- Counting Ourselves, pg. 41

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Not all queer, gender-diverse and intersex people have the same needs. Check in with young people about their own understanding of what they need & help them access



Avoid making assumptions about people, and using gendered language (e.g. instead of "do you have a boyfriend?" try "do you have a partner?")



Take people seriously if they express feeling unsafe at home due to transphobia. Many young people are turned away from emergency housing services due to a lack of understanding about the serious impacts transphobia can have on someone's life.



Sometimes people's names might not match their official documents. Make sure you always refer to them by the name they choose.



When helping people find flats, consider looking for queer friendly spaces, e.g. Queer Housing NZ (on Facebook).



When in search of emergency accommodation, consider if the service is rainbow competent: e.g., do they have gender neutral bathrooms? are the rooms single rooms? It's important not to force people into a binary choice service that does not fit their gender identity. Queer, gender-diverse and intersex young people do best when provided with a range of housing options.



REFERENCES

Vandenburg, T. (in progress). *Beyond Four Walls: The experiences of trans and gender - diverse people with experiences of homelessness in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

Veale J, Byrne J, Tan K, Guy S, Yee A, Nopera T & Bentham R (2019) *Counting Ourselves: The health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Transgender Health Research Lab, University of Waikato: Hamilton NZ.