

2018/19

ANNUAL REPORT

# ISMSS

Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services

Housed in the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education, the **Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS)** leads groundbreaking research that affects policy development, intervention, education and community outreach for sexual and gender minorities (SGM), nationally and globally.

Bringing together research, teaching, institutional service and community outreach under one umbrella enables us to combine our studies and services functions in ways that create opportunities for innovative intellectual work and sustained educational and community outreach.

Our research not only helps youth at large, but also guides professional development and education for teachers, social workers, family physicians, psychologists, guidance counsellors and other caring professionals, enabling them to be better resources and advocates for SGM youth and their families.



## MISSION

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS) is an interdisciplinary hub for scholarly and community work on sexual and gender minority identities, issues and concerns. Our mission is to advance groundbreaking research, policy and practice focused on education, health and social services, emphasizing children, youth, families and communities.

## RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

Foci of Research Program of Canada Research Chair in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies:

- Comprehensive health, educational, and cultural concerns of sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth and young adults in intersections with race, class, Indigeneity, and other relational differences.
- Addressing sexual and gender minority issues in educational and social policymaking, law, and legislation in Canada and its provinces and territories.
- Parameters of caring professional development and practice for teachers, nurses, police officers, social workers, counselling psychologists, and other professionals working with vulnerable SGM youth and young adults.
- Researching resilience as a construct, process, and outcome in helping sexual and gender minority youth and young adults to deal with adversity and trauma.
- Advancing greater synchronicity among interdisciplinary research, policy, and practice in working with sexual and gender minority youth and young adults in Canada.
- Using research to inform the ongoing development of an evidence-based C3 model for working with SGM youth and young adults, which is focused on comprehensive health education and outreach, community intervention and supports, and compassionate policing.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

iSMSS offers a variety of innovative programs and services, including:

- **Family Resilience Project:** It utilizes a holistic model to provide mental health support to SGM youth and their families and caregivers by offering free therapy with registers psychologists as well as integrated supports and services.
- **Camp fYrefly:** A national leadership and wellness camp for SGM and allied youth that focuses on their individual needs, socialization, and health and wellness as well as ways to help youth grow into resilience.

- **fYrefly in Schools:** An anti-homo/bi/transphobia peer-to-peer education program for all students, teachers and staff in K-12 schools. We are currently expanding this professional development to not-for-profits and businesses.
- **Where the Rivers Meet:** Where the Rivers Meet is a project that grew out of the need to address systemic discrimination and create specialized programming catering to the lived realities of Two-Spirit, and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth. It focuses on developing and providing leadership workshops designed to combat homophobia and transphobia in K-12 schools. We just received funding to expand this program to Calgary.
- **Comprehensive Health Education Workers' Project (CHEW):** Development and delivery of research-informed, age-appropriate, non-judgmental comprehensive health education for LGBTQ2S+ youth who are in care, homeless and/or sex-work involved.
- **University of Alberta Pride Week:** Engaging campus communities, and coming together to build supportive, caring, and respectful campus environments for LGBTQ2S+ students, staff, and faculty.
- **Pride Tape:** Showing support to/from teammates, coaches, parents and pros to LGBTQ2S+ players. Showing every player they belong in the game.
- **You can Play:** Ensures safety and inclusion of LGBTQ2S+ folks who participate or wish to participate in sport; including: athletes, coaches, and fans.
- **nohomophobes.com:** A website that actively tracks how often homophobic language is used in social media on a daily bases. This is an educational tool, used to raise rareness about the prevalence of homophobia

## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Highlights of some major activities from the past year include:

- **Mayor's Pride Brunch:** With over 400 community leaders, supporters and friends of fYrefly, we celebrated camp successes and raised funds to help cover the costs of Alberta's North and South camps.
- **Strategic Planning:** In 2018, iSMSS added an Executive Director position. We recognized how much the institute was growing and in need for re-evaluation and long term planning. We have spent much of the last nine months engaging with stakeholders to obtain vision and direction about how to focus iSMSS' priorities in the next 5 - 10 years.
- **iSMSS Scholarships:** We offer several undergraduate and graduate scholarships for UofA students focused on LGBTQ2S+ research, leadership activities and community service.
- **Research:** Dr. André Grace and his reachers team continue to conduct research in the following areas:
  - Queer studies
  - Inclusive education
  - Critical lifelong learning
  - Welfare-and-work issues for LGBTQ Teachers

He is currently researching the impact of caring, compassionate professionals on LGBTQ2S+ youth. iSMSS is exploring additional research projects with community partners.



## OUR PEOPLE

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## FIND OUT MORE

Visit [iSMSS.ualberta.ca](http://iSMSS.ualberta.ca) for detailed information about our research, programs and services

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