

Sexual Health Information Seeking Behaviour of Transgender People

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they/them

Who I Am

- Second year MLIS student
- Non-binary person
- Cat lover




Why This Research

- Pilot study for LIS 597
- A fair amount of information involving trans people has focused on the concept of “transgender” instead of looking at the experience of people who are trans.
- Inspired by my own experience and those of my friends



Literature Review

- Public school sexual education does not include enough reliable information about transgender people, if there is any (Elia & Eliason, 2010; Holmes & Cahill, 2005)
 - Healthcare professionals often do not know enough to be helpful and are at times, uninformed to the point of being harmful (Bauer et al., 2009)
 - Transgender people are finding it hard to access reliable, inclusive information on safe sex (Bauer et al., 2015; Magee et al., 2012)
 - Transgender people report many different barriers to accessing healthcare (Bauer et al., 2015)
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Literature Review

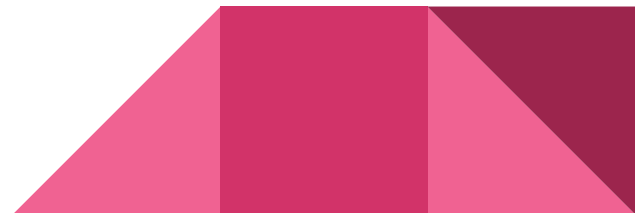
Two main focuses of previous research regarding trans people

- What is the experience of transgender people accessing the healthcare system, especially relating to sexual health?
- How are transgender people finding information about their transition?
- Notable studies: TransPULSE Project in Ontario, LGBT Youth information Seeking in Chicago, Transgender Information Seeking



Research Question

- How are transgender people finding information regarding their sexual health and what are their thoughts on the sources found?




Methodology


- Informed by Brenda Dervin's Sensemaking and Thomas Wilson's Information Behaviour Theory
- Sensemaking explores how people navigate a knowledge gap.
- Semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and analyzed for themes
- Received ethics approval from the University of Alberta



Recruitment

- A poster was put up at The Landing and circulated through social media.
 - Between 1-5 people who identified as transgender/did not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and were 18 years or older.
 - Five people contacted me
 - Participants ranged between 18-24 years old.
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Interview questions

- Can you tell me about a time when you had question about your sexual health and wellbeing and how you went about finding an answer?
 - What do you do when you find misinformation or information that you don't trust?
 - What kind of information do you trust?
 - Where do you normally go to find sexual health information?
 - What sources do you normally rely on?
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Analysis of Data

- Data was analyzed looking for themes
- Focus of analysis was looking at how people found resources, what the resource was, and how they felt about the resource




Results

Themes:


- Stumbling Into Information
- Concerns about validity of information on the internet
- Crowdsourcing information

Resources:

- Online Resources
 - Communities
 - Doctors
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Results

Sources:

- Online resources -- Hudson's MTF, YouTube
 - Doctors -- One person reported a trusting relationship with their doctor. Other reports were less positive
 - Communities -- Pride Centre, queer hockey team, Facebook groups, online
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Results

Participant thoughts on sources:

- Concerns about validity of the information found online
- Try to deal with this by crowdsourcing information
- Participants expressed being more likely to trust other trans people who acknowledge that they do not speak for everyone
- Doctors – participants want to be able to have reliable healthcare professionals to speak with



Limitations

- Small study -- only five participants
- Age range -- everyone was under 25 who participated



Recommendations for LIS Spaces

- Staff need training on working with gender diverse people -- pronouns, washrooms, not assuming
- Information available needs to be up-to-date and updated regularly
- Visible signs that this is a safe place
- Collection management -- if possible resources purchased from not just the usual vendors. Eg. YA books about gender diverse people where being gender diverse isn't the focus--it just is.



Further Research

- How do we get this body of information to be more easily available?
- How do we check the validity of this information?



Questions?



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