



Veterans Affairs Canada

2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum

Discussion and Actions

August 28-29, 2024

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Report Introduction

Content Warning: This content involves potentially painful subject matter that explores the history of discrimination and harm suffered by 2SLGBTQI+ service members. Some readers may be personally affected by this content. If this is the case, help is available.

If you are a Veteran, family member or caregiver the support of a mental health professional is available 24/7, 365 days a year at no cost to you. Call 1-800-268-7708.

We at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) would like to recognize and thank all Veterans and their families, across Canada, for their service to this country.

From coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this land home.

We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past. We also reaffirm our commitment to improving relationships between nations and improving our own understanding of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. We

all have a responsibility to consider how we can, in our own way, move forward in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Please see [Appendix A](#) to review important definitions of sex, gender, sexual orientation, and two-spirited. The following terms are used throughout the report in accordance with [language used by the Government of Canada](#).

- **2SLGBTQI+** is an acronym that represents the following categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual (those who are attracted to both men and women), transgender, intersex, queer (a self-identifying term used in some gay communities), questioning, and two-spirit. There are many different acronyms that may be used by various communities. It should be noted that acronyms like these may combine sex, gender, and sexual orientation attributes into one. This combination may or may not be appropriate in all circumstances.



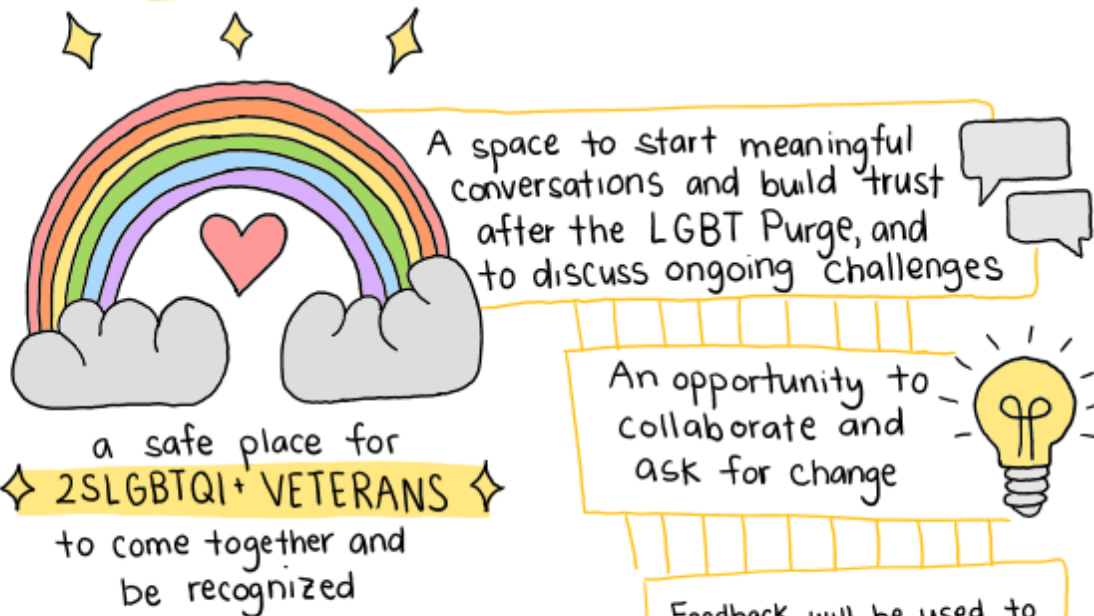
- **LGBT Purge** is a term used to describe specific historical acts of systematic discrimination against the 2SLGBTQI+ military and Veteran community at the hands of the Canadian Armed Forces and other governmental institutions. At the time that these injustices were brought to light through legal discourse, the more inclusive acronym of “2SLGBTQI+” had not yet replaced “LGBT”.

Throughout the discussions that took place during the Forum, acknowledgement of the systematic discrimination that 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans faced in their service during the LGBT Purge, and the adversity that they continue to face due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity were identified as crucial points. Hosting an annual 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum (the Forum) is of the utmost importance as we move forward to address the inequities and challenges that 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans and their families face. We reaffirm our commitment to listen and enact change for 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.

Quotes featured throughout this report highlight anonymous and open discussion that occurred throughout the Forum and should not to be attributed to individuals in the photos included. Digital artwork was created by an artist / analyst in real time during the event, and enhanced for presentation in the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forum 2024



THEMES OF DISCUSSION

- Major milestones in 2SLGBTQI+ rights
- Advancements in research, recognition, and support
- Opportunities to work with traditional Veteran organizations
- Minority stress for gender diverse Veterans
- Culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces



Graphic visualization providing an executive summary of the VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024

Forum Objectives



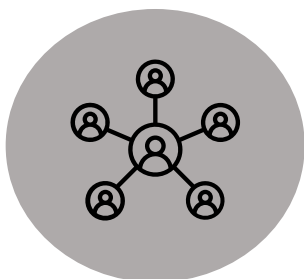
Objective 1

Engage meaningfully with 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans and the stakeholder community



Objective 2

Learn the challenges and progress in meeting the individual needs of 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans to bring awareness and discuss



Objective 3

Develop community-based solutions to drive change and achieve equity

Forum Participants

The 2024 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum was held in partnership with Rainbow Veterans of Canada (RVC) and the LGBT Purge Fund. It included a diverse group of Veterans and community partners, with 75 attending in-person, and 39 attending virtually.

Event Structure

The full event agenda can be found in [Appendix B](#). The first day of the Forum was focused on optional in-person activities, including one-on-one appointments with front-line VAC employees so that 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans could receive specific support with accessing VAC benefits and services. In the afternoon, there was an optional Sharing Circle led by an local Indigenous Elder – see [Appendix C](#) for graphic visualization created during this session.

On the second day of the Forum, there were multiple sessions that featured guest speakers on issues relevant to the community. **There were two full group plenary sessions and three breakout sessions for smaller group discussions.** Participants had the opportunity to rotate through all three breakout sessions.

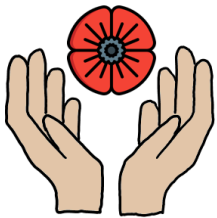


Session Topics

- **Plenary Session:** Major milestones in 2SLGBTQI+ Veteran rights advocacy, the LGBT Purge Fund, and Rainbow Veterans Canada;
- **Plenary Session:** Advancements in research, recognition, and support to the 2SLGBTQI+ Veteran community;
- **Breakout Session:** Opportunities to work with traditional Veteran organizations to ensure that 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans are well supported;
- **Breakout Session:** Minority stress and the correlation between gender diverse individuals and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) rates; and,
- **Breakout Session:** Culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for 2SLGBTQI+ serving members.

Minister's Welcome

Minister Petitpas Taylor opened the Forum by sharing her objectives for the day: to take more steps towards a better and fairer Canada; while bringing awareness to the stories and advice of Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ servicemembers and Veterans.



Opening with respect and gratitude for the service and sacrifice of **2SLGBTQI+ Veterans**



Forum is a platform to recognize and discuss the challenges faced in the past and present, by Veterans with diverse sexuality and/or gender expression...

SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION
LGBT PURGE
HATRED
LACK OF RECOGNITION



We will participate in today's discussion with open hearts and listen to each Veteran, regardless of their identity or who they love

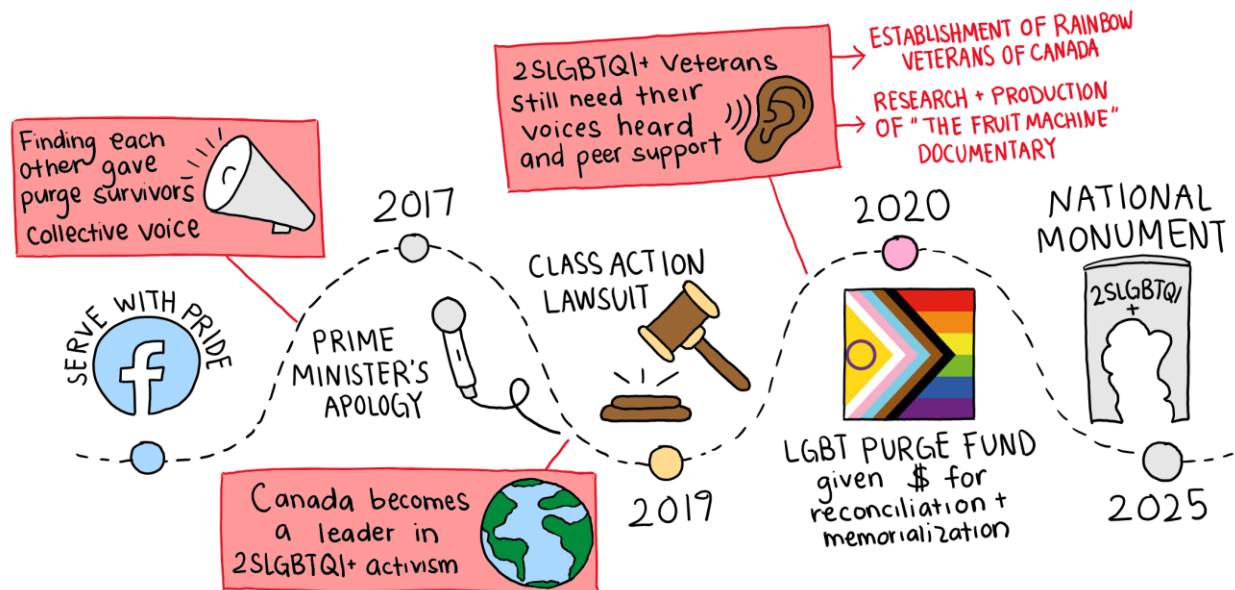
Graphic visualization of the Minister's opening remarks
(VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

Plenary Sessions

→ Major milestones in 2SLGBTQI+ rights

This session focused on advocacy, reconciliation, and memorialization efforts for 2SLGBTQI+ service members and Veterans.

This session focused on advocacy, reconciliation, and commemoration efforts for serving members and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.



Graphic visualization from the major milestones in 2SLGBTQI+ rights Plenary Session (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

Speakers highlighted that survivors of the LGBT Purge finding each other is what created collective voice. The LGBT Purge class action lawsuit settlement in 2019 included one of the largest financial settlements for 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians in history. Research about the LGBT Purge and media such as the documentary, "The Fruit Machine", were cited by speakers as key for advocacy efforts and maintaining their collective voice.

"It's incredibly important that Canadians understand that [the LGBT Purge] happened and it's not ancient history. It's very recent history. And we have blazed a trail that I believe can make a big difference, not just in Canada, but globally as well."



Speakers also shared some of the landmark measures that have taken place in more recent years, such as a partnered trip with VAC to Vimy and Paschendale, and the establishment of a heraldic badge for 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans. There was also a virtual walkthrough of the LGBT Purge Fund Thunderhead 2SLGBTQI+ national monument, which is scheduled for completion in 2025.

Speakers emphasized that 2SLGBTQI+ Veteran advocacy has been groundbreaking, yet still, many Canadians are not aware of the LGBT Purge and the impact it continues to have. Participants at large called for more research and empathy to prevent misinformation and promote societal understanding. Documents released as part of the class action lawsuit are still being reviewed, and speakers shared their intent to continue to release new information about the events that transpired and those implicated, as it becomes available.



Graphic visualization from the major milestones in 2SLGBTQI+ rights Plenary Session (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

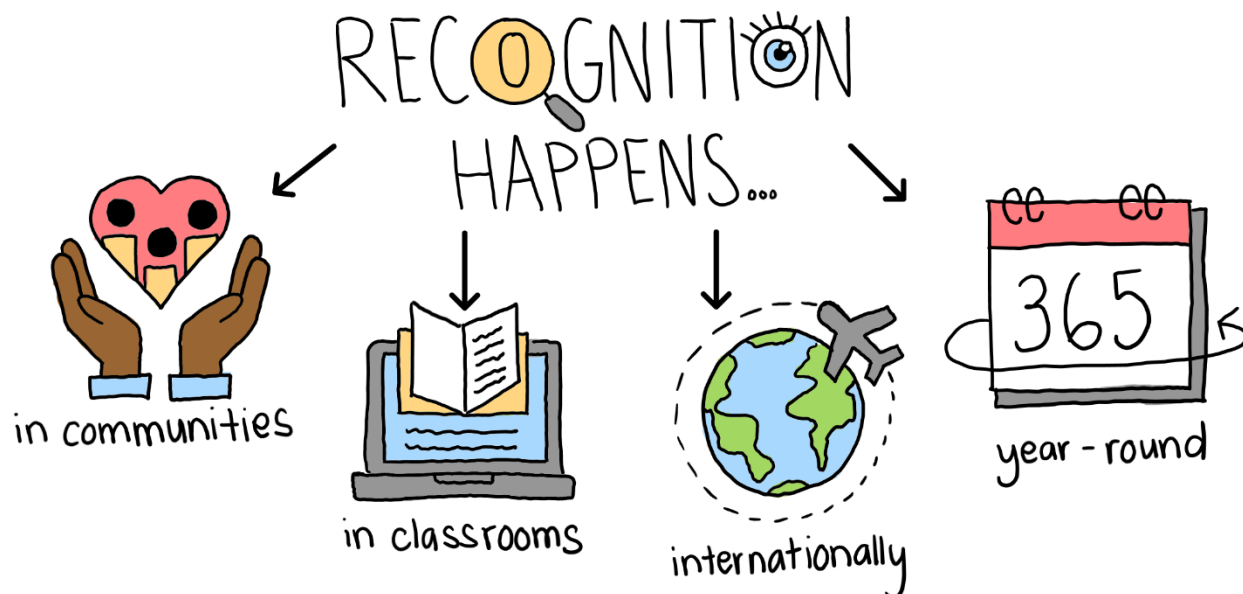
“It’s so important that the truth be told about what happened during the [LGBT] Purge because the lack of understanding is huge.”

→ Advancements in recognition, support, and research

A panel of leaders within VAC shared the progress that has been made in increasing recognition, support, and research of 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.

Speakers discussed the Pride in service: 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians in uniform online feature, which has reached Canadians coast to coast to coast. This resource was developed by VAC in consultation with RVC and the LGBT Purge Fund to provide educational materials, tell the personal stories of 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans, and provide recognition.

“I was just struck by the the power of storytelling... and how much those stories help us honour the past, but also chart the way for the future and those individual stories come together in a collective movement.”



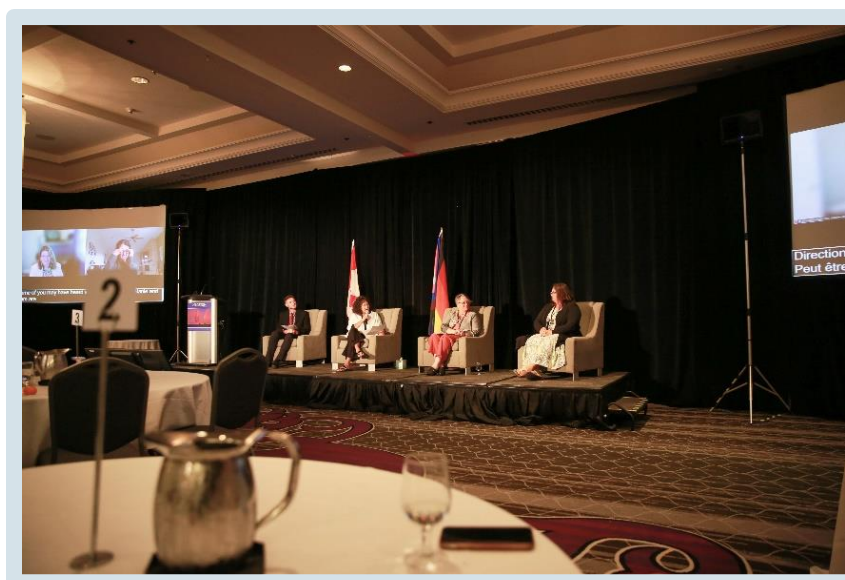
Graphic visualization from the advancements in research, recognition, and support Plenary Session (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

“The nurses at Veterans Affairs are much more aware of how discrimination and bias can impact their nursing practice. I can tell you that they are making different conversations happen in the nursing-Veteran therapeutic relationships than they were a year ago. And that is super stimulating.”

Speakers shared about the work being done by VAC’s National Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Nursing that educates nurses across the country. Speakers shared that the committee intends to develop evidence-based best practices in nursing guidelines to promote Veteran

health equity – including specific recommendations for 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.

Speakers provided an overview of VAC’s multi-year plan to modernize its Table of Disabilities and Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines for the provision of disability benefits. Speakers highlighted how information about both sex and gender, best practices for working with individuals who have experienced sexual trauma, and knowledge about transgender health are being incorporated into the guidelines as part of the modernization plan. Speakers also cited the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund and the Commemorative Partnership Program (CPP) as providers of annual funds to community stakeholders that further build equity for 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.



The 2021 Census, 2022 Canadian Veteran Health Survey, and 2023 Veterans’ Well-being Community Health Needs Assessment were referenced by speakers as emerging research, bringing novel health and well-being information about 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans. This research would not have been possible without partnership with RVC, 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans at large, and their participation in research-related outreach.

During the group discussion, participants expressed concern about their quality of life as

“There's a very, very tight connection between how we've come to feel about ourselves and our capacity for intimacy, our capacity for sexual expression. [We have] questions about specific interventions that support our effort to rebuild that.”

it relates to sexuality and their ability to be intimate. They shared that discourse about sexuality and access to appropriate sex therapy is already limited for Canadians, but that it is even more limited for those who are 2SLGBTQI+, for those who have experienced sexual trauma, and especially for LGBT Purge survivors. Participants shared that experiencing the LGBT Purge made them

“become enemies with themselves – their own hearts, souls, and bodies”, challenging their ability to become socially and physically intimate.

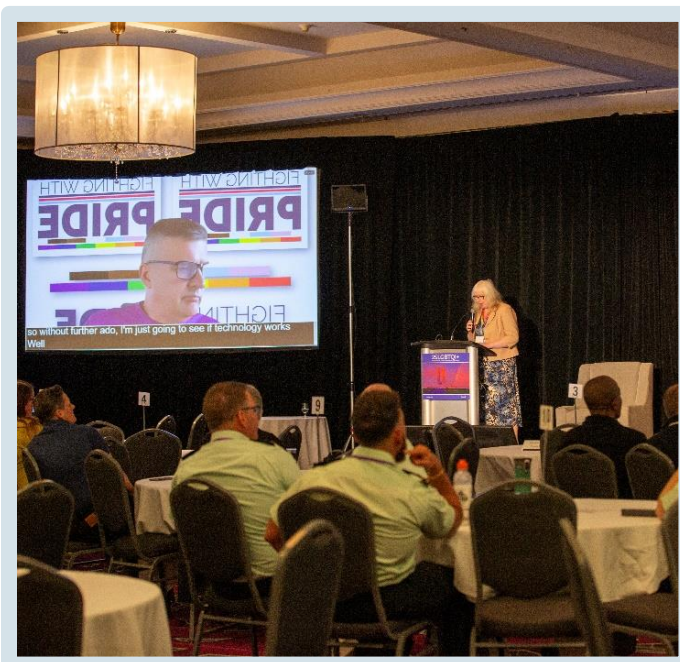
Participants also emphasized the need for more research on how joining the military affects psychosocial development, including sexuality.

“When people join at 17 years old and they're in the developmental years, there is a significant impact on them having their sexuality shaped by the military context.”



Breakout Sessions

→ Opportunities to work with traditional Veteran organizations

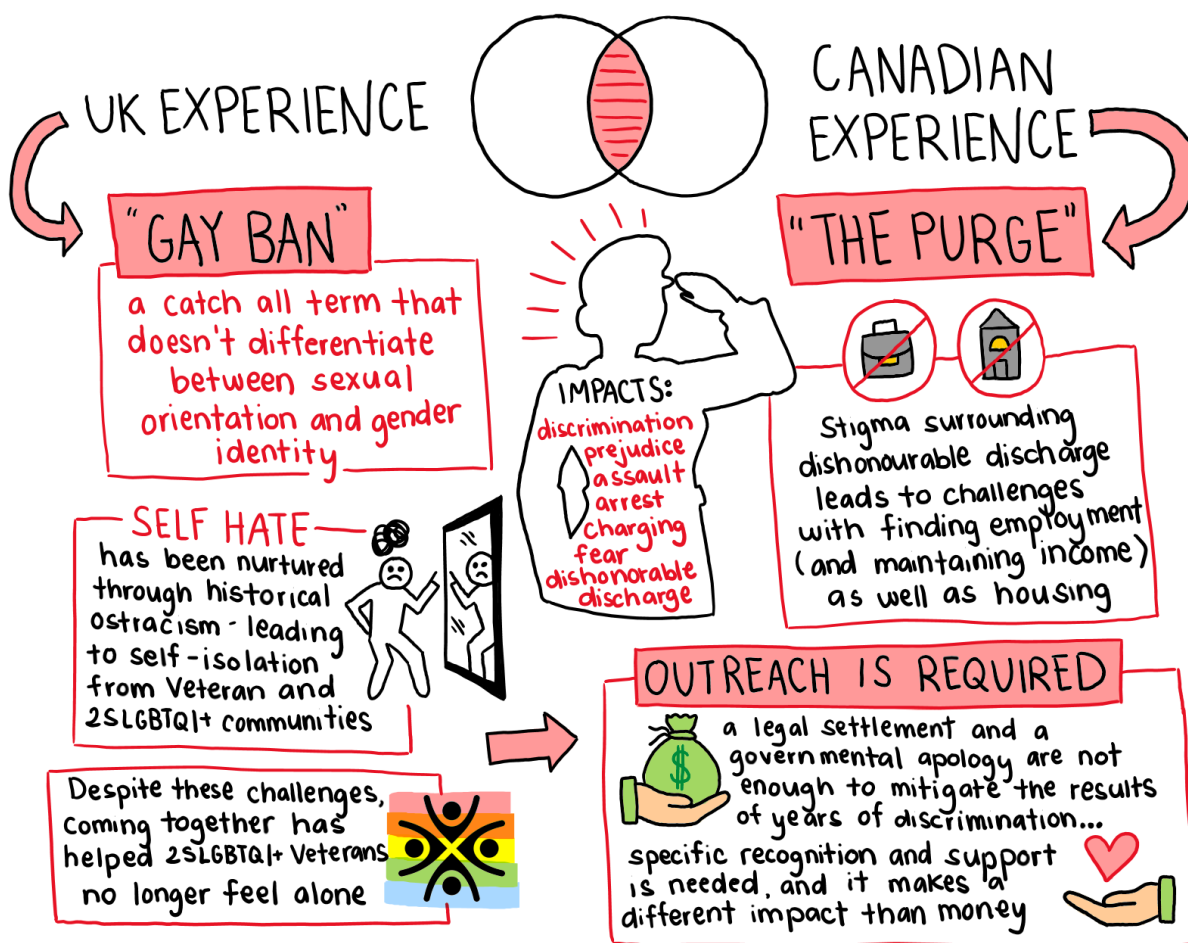


Speakers from Fighting with Pride, a non-profit charity that supports the health and wellbeing of 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans, service personnel, and their families in the United Kingdom (UK), shared a brief history about the experiences of gender and sexually diverse Veterans in the UK. Legislation (the *Sexual Offences Act*) enacted in 1967 decriminalized same-sex relations between consenting adults in civilian life, but excluded those serving in the military. The "gay ban" in the UK military was enforced from 1967 until 2000. It was lifted on January 12, 2000, following a

ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. However, it took several more years for the UK military to fully understand and implement genuine 2SLGBTQI+ inclusion, and the speakers stressed the importance of this ongoing work.

In 2022, a committee (the LGBT Veterans Independent Review) was set up to understand the impact of the "gay ban". In 2023, the committee published 49 specific recommendations and proposed financial compensation of £50 million for survivors. Speakers emphasized the importance of implementation of these recommendations, and the rebuilding of trust with 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans. Some of the key recommendations included restoring medals, addressing pension issues, and improving mental health and well-being support. Peer support was highlighted as essential for helping Veterans rebuild their lives and regain confidence. Creativity in engagement with 2SLGBTQI+ specific community channels was (and is) needed.

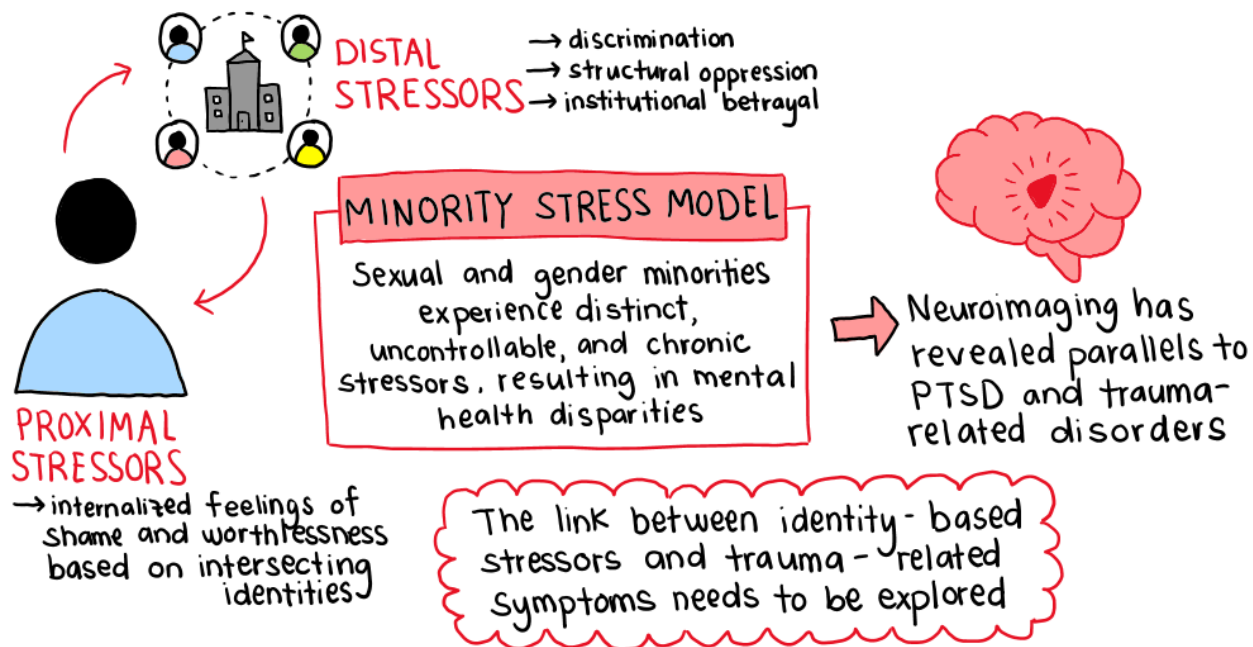
"I was so angry, that I came out in that moment... and I have never regretted it because it was the one moment, the final moment in which I was able to be myself."



Graphic visualization from the opportunities to work with traditional Veteran organizations Breakout Session (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

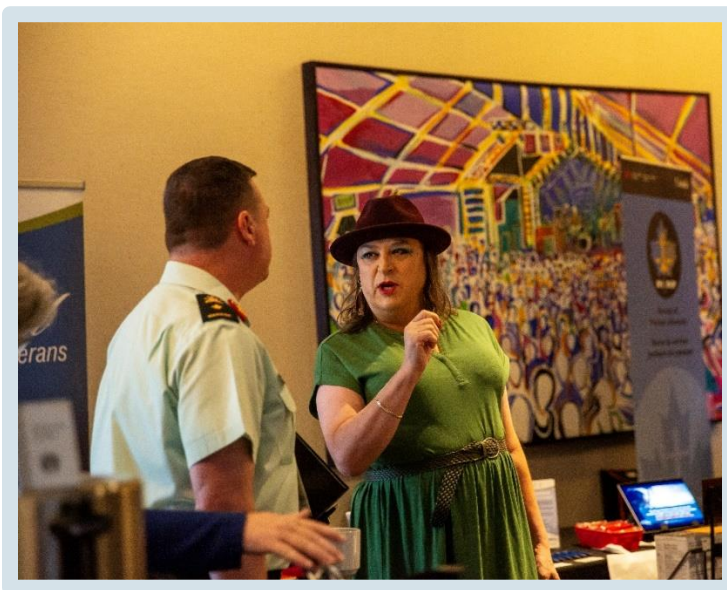
→ Minority stress for gender diverse Veterans

This session focused on the minority stress that is experienced by sexually and gender diverse Veterans, also referred to as sexual and gender minorities.



Graphic visualization from the minority stress for gender diverse Veterans Breakout Session (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

The speaker discussed “Minority Stress Theory” – where minorities (including sexual and gender minorities) experience unique, chronic stressors related to their stigmatized identities. These stressors come from many sources, at different levels, and intersect with other racial, ethnic, and social identities. This theory has been widely accepted to explain the mental health disparities and more frequent trauma-related symptoms that minorities face when compared to their counterparts. However, associated neuroimaging studies with regard to chronic stress and trauma have failed to account for gender identity and sexual orientation as factors,



leaving the physical impact on the body misunderstood. The speaker also promoted the consideration of moral injury as part of a minority service member's and Veteran's experience.



The speaker presented the “Minority Mosaic Study”, that aimed to better understand minorities’ lived experiences with minority stress from an intersectional perspective, the impact of minority stress on the brain and body, and the relationship between minority stress and moral injury. Participant feedback was incorporated throughout to improve the study's design, relevance, and impact. Participants included civilians, LGBT Purge survivors, Veterans, and service members. The researchers interviewed 40 individuals about their experiences with minority stressors, moral injury, and coming out. In the second part of the study, participants underwent neuroimaging while recalling morally injurious events, to identify physical effects on the brain. The key result was that similar neural activity was observed in participants experiencing minority stress and/or moral injury, as is observed in those experiencing PTSD and other trauma-related disorders.

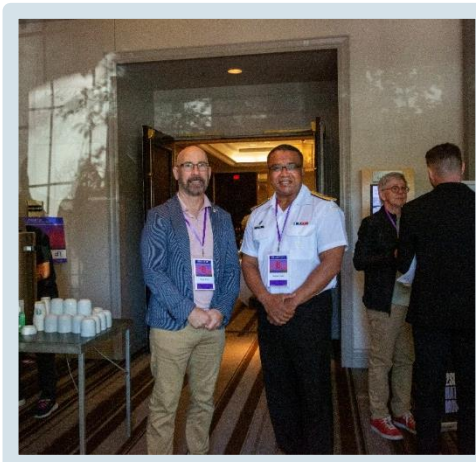
The study's findings underscored the importance of investigating the distinctive way that minority stress, moral injury, and trauma interact with and impact Veterans’ physical and mental health. The speaker recommended that service providers adopt a broader definition of trauma when working with minority Veterans – “insidious trauma” – which encapsulates pervasive experiences of discrimination, oppression and fear that may lead to trauma-related symptoms.

“Because you mentioned a bit about the stress level... I know myself [I've experienced] since I was retriggered, tons of problems with the joints and stuff like that.”

→ Culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

The speaker shared relevant personal experiences that highlighted the importance of a strategic approach to CAF culture change that targets not only the symptoms, but also the root causes of systemic racism, discrimination, and misconduct.

The CAF's Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) was created to unify efforts against sexual misconduct. It has since expanded its scope to promote broader positive cultural change; mainly through supporting leadership with evidence-based decision-making on areas such as anti-racism,



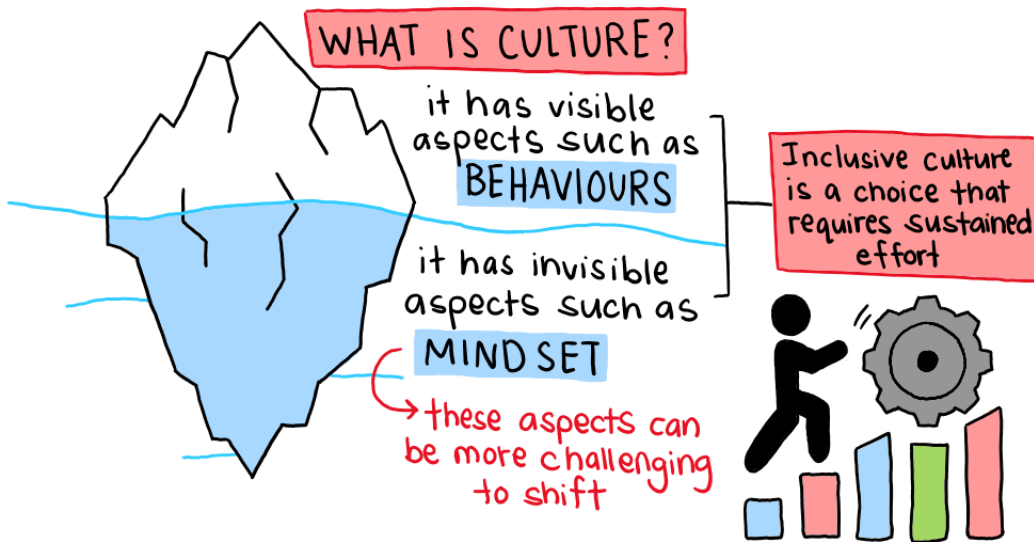
employment equity, diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as professional conduct, grievance resolution, and conflict management. Key initiatives discussed were: an anti-racism toolkit; an inclusive language lexicon; a performance appraisal process for inclusive leadership; efforts to engage equity-deserving groups; and, plans to develop a 2SLGBTQI+ action plan.

The speaker pointed out that culture change at an organizational level takes time, and that while visible behaviours can be measured and addressed, it is the invisible mindsets that often underlie problematic behaviours. The speaker emphasized that the solution is to create a psychologically safe and well-being focused environment. Dialogue and honest feedback from all members was cited as crucial to any change in the underlying mindsets of servicemembers. Also cited as essential was active and sustained leadership who can model appropriate conduct, hold themselves accountable, and take decisive action, while amplifying the voices of equity-deserving groups.

Lastly, the speaker shared that implementing comprehensive training programs focused on inclusivity and respect is essential to culture change. Participants asked about efforts to educate CAF members on the history of the LGBT Purge. The speaker confirmed that the CAF is modernizing both their training and discipline methods to promote

positive behaviour change, as well as incorporating microlearning, conversational, and experiential learning into regimens.

“Change does take a long time, but the fun thing about change is that tiny things can make a difference.”



CULTURE CHANGE IS REQUIRED IN THE CAF

change is not linear or homogenous

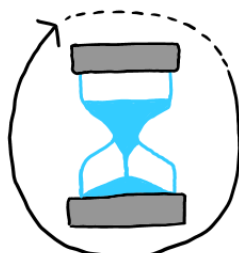
The CAF has multiple organizational streams moving towards the same inclusive vision



- providing evidence-based decision support to leaders
- people → training
- equipment
- infrastructure

Integrating the many aspects of culture change requires a comprehensive implementation plan, as well as dedicated resources

Implementing change takes time, especially **policy change**



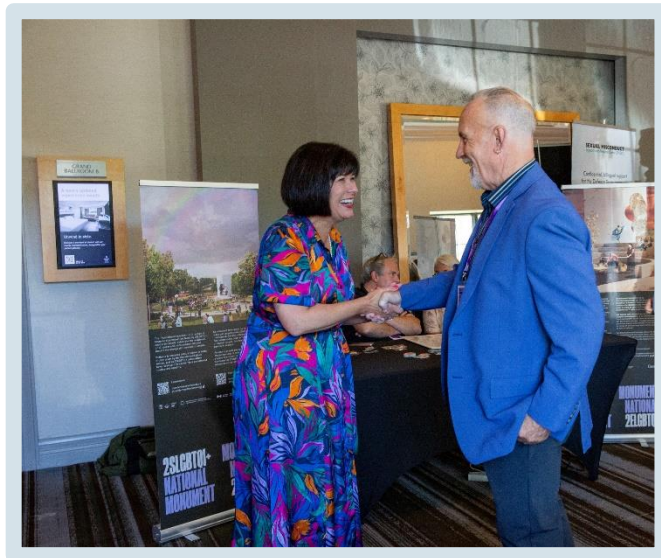
Policy change creates reasonable expectation for support, and inaction can cause harm

Graphic visualization from the culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces Breakout Session (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

Action Items for Change

While some questions and concerns were addressed at the Forum, VAC also committed to taking action for long term impact. The list below is not meant to be exhaustive, and changes are ongoing; its purpose is to set goals and promote transparency and accountability.

The following commitments are being worked on in the specified timeline and are being tracked by the Department. VAC's Community Engagement Division plans to communicate progress with attendees and the broader Veteran community.



Major milestones in 2SLGBTQI+ rights

ACTION ITEMS	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Provide mandatory education to all employees about the LGBT Purge.	★		
Enrich peer support programming available to 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.			★
Post 2SLGBTQI+ inclusive signage in area offices.	★		

Advancements in research, recognition, and support

ACTION ITEMS	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Provide support for trusted community organizations in delivering programs and services for 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.	★		
Support research that investigates diverse sexual orientations and seeks to understand the impacts of military psychosocial development on sexuality.			★
Improve sexual therapy support available to 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans, ensuring that it is culturally sensitive and trauma-informed.			★

Opportunities to work with traditional Veteran organizations

ACTION ITEMS	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Support more events for healing that recognize 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans' many cultures – including Sharing Circles and Sweat Lodges for Indigenous Veterans.		★	
Develop supports for family members of LGBT Purge survivors.			★

Minority stress for gender diverse Veterans

ACTION ITEMS	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Support research that further investigates how minority stress, moral injury, and trauma interact and uniquely impact sexually and/or gender diverse Veterans.			★
Inform all employees about “insidious trauma” and the connection between minority stress, moral injury, and manifestations of trauma.	★		

Culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces

ACTION ITEMS	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Collaborate with the Canadian Armed Forces to capture and share the personal stories of LGBT Purge survivors and connect them with the 2SLGBTQI+ military and Veteran community.	★		

Appendix A: Terminology

The following table has been reproduced from its [original source](#) – the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

	Sex	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Two-Spirit
What is it?	Biological attributes, including physical features, chromosomes, gene expression, hormones, and anatomy	A composite of socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and/or attributes that a given society considers appropriate for members of a given sex	Description of emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction	Community organizing tool for Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island who embody diverse sexualities, gender identities, roles, and/or expressions
Who does the term apply to?	All people and animals	Non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people in the Western world	Non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people in the Western world	Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island with diverse sexualities and genders
Examples in Western terms	Male, female, intersex	Man, woman, boy, girl, gender diverse, non-binary, transgender, queer	Heterosexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, asexual, queer	Two-spirit challenges Western terms of gender and sexual orientation. It allows Indigenous Peoples to reconnect with their traditional languages, ways, and cultures within a pre-colonial setting

Appendix B: Forum Agenda

2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum Veterans Affairs Canada

August 28, 2024
Fredericton, NB
Hybrid Event

DAY 1 – August 28			
Time	Description	Intent	Lead
Optional activities			
12:00 – 16:00	One-on-one discussions with VAC staff on VAC benefits	Optional for attendees who don't sign up to attend the sweat lodge, they can register to meet in-person with VAC frontline staff to discuss their individual files.	VAC staff
12:30 – 16:00	Sharing Circle	Optional for attendees to attend a sharing circle.	Todd Ross , Rainbow Veterans of Canada (RVC)
18:00 – 20:00	Registration Welcome reception	Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, will host a welcome reception for Forum participants. Participants can register as they enter the reception.	Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor , Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

**2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum
Veterans Affairs Canada**

**August 29, 2024
Fredericton, NB
Hybrid Event**

DAY 2 – August 29			
Time	Description	Intent	Lead
8:30 – 9:00	Coffee/Registration	Coffee is served with time for members to arrive and informally meet	All
9:00 – 9:30	Indigenous Tribute	Indigenous Blessing Ceremony by Grand Chief Ron Tremblay, Wolastoqey Nation, NB	Grand Chief Ron Tremblay
9:30-9:35	Introductions	Land acknowledgement and introduction of the Minister for welcoming remarks	Amy Meunier , Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Commemoration and Public Affairs (CPA)
9:35 – 9:45	Welcome	Welcome remarks from the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Ginette Petitpas Taylor.	Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor , Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence
9:45 – 10:15	Keynote presentation 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Milestones	Presentation from Rainbow Veterans of Canada and The LGBT Purge Fund on major milestones: April Vimy trip commemorating 2SLGBTQI+ First World War Veterans. 2SLGBTQI+ Veteran new crest Thunderhead Monument	Todd Ross , Co-Chair, Rainbow Veterans of Canada Svend Robinson , former MP Burnaby-Douglas, New Democratic

		Museum travelling exhibit Svend Robinson's new book update	Party, first openly gay MP
10:15 – 10:45	Break		
10:45 - 11:45	Panel Progress in supporting 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans	<p>Panelists to share advancements in recognition and support to the 2SLGBTQI+ Veteran community.</p> <p>Commemoration/Recognition - VAC Pride in Service Webpages</p> <p>Field Nurses 2SLGBTQI+ Committee</p> <p>Service Delivery</p> <p>2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Well-being fund community projects and Research</p>	<p>Panel Moderator: Christine McDowell, Associate Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada</p> <p>Q&A Moderator: Shelley Colter, Registered Psychotherapist</p> <p>Sylvie Thibodeau-Sealy, Director of Policy, Learning and Recognition, Commemoration and Public Affairs</p> <p>Patti Parkyn, Field Nursing Services Officer, Service Delivery</p> <p>Melanie MacDonald National Program Manager, Centralized Operations Division, SD</p> <p>Lisa Garland Baird, Senior Researcher, Strategic Policy Planning and Programs</p>

11:45 – 12:30	Lunch		
12:30 – 13:30	Breakout Session Cycle 1	Participants will rotate through three breakout sessions happening concurrently throughout the afternoon. The presentations will cycle three times to give each participant a chance to attend all discussions.	
	Breakout Room #1 Breaking into traditional Veteran organizations	Fighting with Pride is a UK based charity that supports disenfranchised 2SLGBTQI+ personnel that served in the Armed Forces and were impacted by anti-2SLGBTQI+ regulations, discrimination, and apathy from command. Session focused on opportunities to work with traditional Veteran organizations to ensure that 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans are well supported.	Presenter(s): Craig Jones Board Chair, Fighting with Pride UK and Caroline Paige , CEO Fighting with Pride UK Moderator: Pamela Harrison , Director General (DG) Community Engagement
	Breakout Room #2 Presentation on Minority Stress Work by Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families	Presentation on Minority Stress Work by Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families Dr Nicholas is the Director of Clinical Research at Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families. His research explores learning models to predict psychiatric illness, including examining biomarkers for PTSD. This work underscores much of the research he conducts on minority stress and the correlation between gender-diverse individuals and PTSD rates in the community.	Presenter: Dr. Andrew Nicholson, PhD , Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families Director of Clinical Research Moderator: Shelley Colter , Registered Psychotherapist

	<p>Breakout Room #3 CAF Diversity and Culture Change for 2SLGBTQI+</p>	<p>A discussion on the progress of CAF culture change with from the DG of Culture at Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC). CPCC is the centre of expertise and the single functional authority for aligning Defence culture to ensure professional conduct meets the standards expected of the profession of arms and the Defence Team.</p>	<p>Presenter: Rear-Admiral Jacques Olivier MSM, CD, DG Culture, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC), the Department of National Defence</p> <p>Panelists: BGen James D. Hawthorne, OMM, CD, Deputy Director Strategy, Policy and Plans (J5D)</p> <p>Lara Rooke, (DND) Defence Team Co-Champion 2SLGBTQI+ - Director General, Engagement, Policy and Research</p> <p>Moderator: Tanya Wiltshire, Manager Women & 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Team</p>
13:30- 13:45	Break		
13:45- 14:45	Breakout Session Cycle 2		
14:45 – 15:00	Break		
15:00 – 16:00	Breakout Session Cycle 3		
16:00 -16:30	Plenary re-group	The group will reconvene to discuss key takeaways from	All

		each session and highlight key themes of the day.	
16:30	Closing	Closing remarks by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence.	Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor , Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

Appendix C: Sharing Circle

TRUTH • HUMILITY • HONESTY • RESPECT • BRAVERY • WISDOM • LOVE

Sharing Indigenous history and traditional practices is like putting together the pieces of an incomplete puzzle

we must prioritize restoring knowledge that originated from Indigenous Peoples

the need to write things down is inherently colonial

OUR LONGHOUSE IS OUR CONSTITUTION

teachings from the...

WINDBEARER

male and female teachings are needed and you need not identify with one

roles in the community are focused on the creation of balance, not gender

Graphic visualization of the Sharing Circle (VAC 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum 2024)

Appendix D: Forum Feedback

As is standard procedure after an event, VAC sent attendees an electronic questionnaire to provide feedback. Key results are reviewed in this section, and all responses have been retained. There were 42 respondents to the questionnaire, with 76% being Veterans, 17% being serving members, and 7% being other community members.

“...what so many of us did not expect was the healing power of joy and laughter that happened while attending the Forum...”

The feedback supported that this Forum was an effective way to start conversations and have meaningful interactions. The mood of the room was generally optimistic. Respondents felt that VAC employees created safe and trauma-informed spaces for them to address their concerns without fear of reprisal or judgement. They noted the professionalism, flexibility, and good coordination by VAC employees, that fostered the building of community connections.

“Having been at these Forums since the beginning, this was by far the best one. Very organized, well spoken... most important, informative and on topic.”

Respondents also provided suggestions for change. Many indicated the need for more time to ask questions. While respondents were glad to note the attendance of serving members, some wished that there was more opportunities for Veterans and serving members to share their differing perspectives.

Finally, respondents suggested that more LGBT Purge survivors to be invited to future Forums.

Feedback Highlights

- 69% of respondents agreed that VAC has advanced on its promise to increase 2SLGBTQI+ engagement since the Forum in 2023.
- 71% of respondents felt recognized by VAC for their contributions to Canadian history.
- 86% of respondents reported a need for more in-depth information on VAC’s website about organizations who are recipients of the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund.

- 86% of respondents felt that VAC's efforts to update the Table of Disabilities and Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines are in line with improving 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans' service experience.
- 98% of respondents wanted to see VAC engage 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans on topics like moral injury and minority stress in the future.